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NATIONAL REVIEW

SEP 16

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Wm. F. Buckley Jr., Vladimir Bukovsky, William McGurn,
. . . and more

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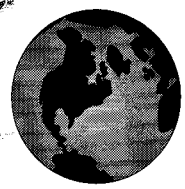

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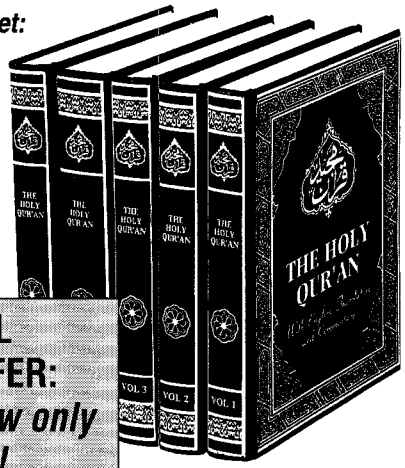

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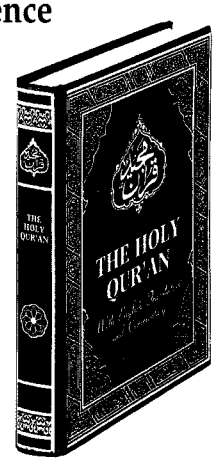

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NATIONAL REVIEW

SEPTEMBER 23, 1991 VOL. XLIII, NO. 17

At the Revolution

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FROM THE EDITOR

Great Event

■ "How much the greatest event it is that ever happened in the world! And how much the best!" said Charles James Fox of the French Revolution. Fox was wrong about 1789, but his words exactly capture our feelings here about the anti-Communist revolution in the Soviet Union.

That is why we are devoting the great bulk of this issue to reflections on it. Several regular features are absent—though not, addicts please note, "Trans-O-Gram"—and our coverage of domestic politics is slim.

Most readers will feel this attention to be justified. Almost everyone agrees with the first half of Fox's quotation. But the instant alarms about an anti-Communist witch hunt suggest that some people are less confident that it is "the best" event that ever happened.

Of course, innocent people should never be lynched; of course, totalitarianism turns all but the bravest into collaborators; of course, we should beware of old Soviet evils returning in new Russian nationalist guises.

But the evil of witch hunts was that witches, if they existed at all, were poor old women who had done no real harm to anyone. Soviet Communists, as the mass graves now uncovered testify, engaged in murder on a horrific scale. They terrorized whole nations. And they destroyed the economy from which they profited as parasites right up to the coup.

The crimes of Communism, like those of Nazism, must now be openly addressed, as Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn argues in this issue. If the torturers are still alive and identifiable, they should pay for their crimes. If those responsible for misgovernment and collapse are still in their jobs, they should lose them (as did ninety thousand Nazis not found guilty of war crimes). And if they are guilty of corruption, they should face trial.

It is adding insult to injury to ask the peoples of the Soviet Union to continue being governed by those who profited from criminal incompetence to the very end—simply to avoid reminding American liberals of McCarthyism.

■ At the exact moment that we sent our last issue off to the printers, tanks were reported to be on their way to attack the Russian Parliament building.

By the time *NR* was in your hands, the coup had collapsed, Mr. Gorbachev had returned to Moscow, the Communist Party had been abolished, the Republics were declaring independence wholesale, and Mr. Yeltsin was the leading man in the state.

This gave our readers one great advantage. It enabled them to evaluate our powers of analysis and prediction in the cold light of retrospect.

Thus our editorial saw the coup as perhaps "the terminal crisis of the Communist system." Robert Conquest forecast that it would fail, possibly very quickly, and that Gorbachev would end up "wholly in Yeltsin's camp." And I amplified that here by arguing that Gorbachev would be Yeltsin's prisoner "in a new Soviet commonwealth of independent Republics without a Communist Party to speak of."

But expect no Pulitzers.

■ Meanwhile, other revolutions. "Off the Record" is being absorbed by "On the Record," which reverts to its old title of "For the Record." We are nothing if not conservative.

Its page will now be occupied by "The Gimlet Eye," where Florence King's brilliantly jaundiced glare will alternate with the basilisk gaze of Andrew Ferguson, who starts this issue.

No fewer than three writers will be filling Nika Hazelton's shoes on "Delectations." Our own Linda Bridges has already made her debut; Digby Anderson will appear next time; and Taki Theodoracopulos will risk life, limb, and liver to report from Gstaad, the Riviera, and the Hamptons, also beginning this issue.

Their beat is *la dolce vita*, but we do not pay expenses. —JOHN O'SULLIVAN

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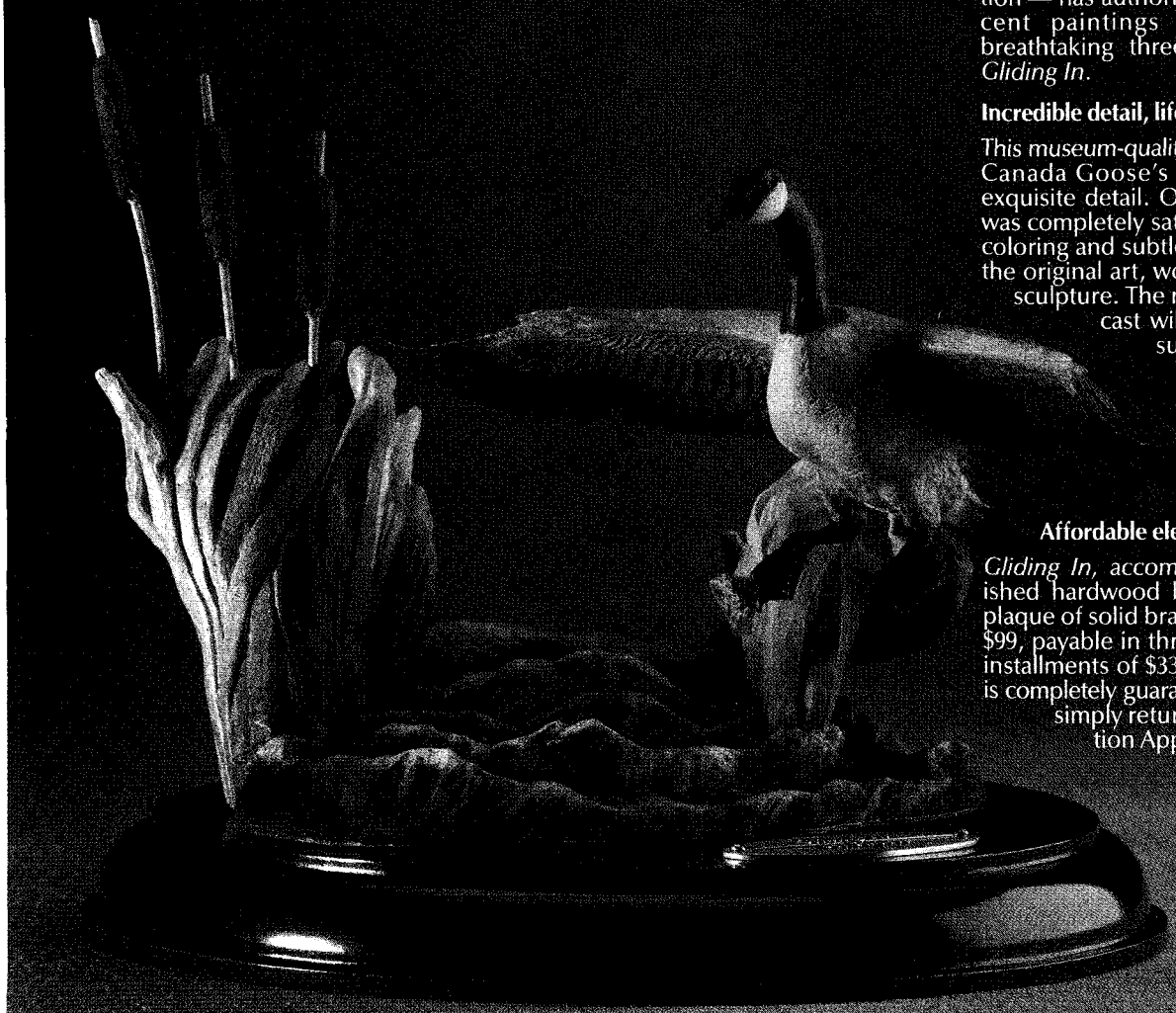

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TRANS-O-GRAM / Kem Putney

1 G	2 A	3 N	4 F	5 K	6 E	7 W	8 P	9 O	10 L	11 H		12 C	13 M	14 B		15 F	16 D	17 J	18 T	19 Q
20 R	21 H	22 U		23 I	24 K	25 F	26 G	27 B	28 Q		29 A	30 L	31 T		32 M	33 J	34 D	35 N	36 H	37 G
38 A	39 V	40 F	41 B	42 S	43 K	44 L		45 H	46 R	47 K	48 P	49 A	50 J	51 Q	52 S	53 I	54 E	55 G	56 N	57 W
58 V		59 L	60 C	61 A		62 J	63 B	64 N		65 U	66 H		67 Q	68 M	69 T	70 F		71 D	72 B	
73 O		74 E	75 C	76 G	77 H	78 A	79 S	80 K	81 J	82 N		83 C	84 R	85 T	86 D	87 E	88 H	89 U		90 F
91 N	92 E	93 T	94 M	95 V		96 D	97 N	98 G	99 F		100B	101W	102J	103Q	104S	105P		106H	107C	108E
	109O	110K		111D	112V	113M	114L		115H	116A	117G		118K	119S	120P	121L	122I	123E	124N	125K
126F	127A		128R	129M	130B	131O	132W	133K		134C	135E	136J	137U	138I		139F	140O		141C	142F
143U	144A	145D		146W	147H	148I		149E	150U	151T	152A	153S		154T	155B	156H	157P		158C	159A
160D	161Q		162T	163S	164K	165L	166O	167F	168H		169J	170H	171U	172F		173N	174R		175M	176I
177R	178J	179V		180Q	181B	182K		183L	184D	185O		186P	187L		188B	189N	190I	191J	192G	

DEFINITIONS

A. Emotional display — 116 152 49 29 78 144 2 61 159 127 / 38

B. Quake phenomenon — 100 72 188 14 181 130 155 41 63 27

C. In a liberal direction — 12 75 83 141 158 60 107 134

D. Yard implement — 160 16 96 34 111 71 184 86 145

E. "Stuffing" specialty — 54 135 92 87 74 6 123 149 108

F. Stereo's predecessor (2 words) — 142 126 4 15 90 25 70 167 99 40 / 139 172

G. Democratic (small "d") institution — 117 98 37 1 76 55 192 26

H. Major residence (2 words) — 168 21 147 170 45 11 88 66 106 36 / 156 77 115

I. Bewitch — 138 190 122 176 53 148 23

J. Home of the Mountaineers — 17 169 178 191 62 136 50 33 102 81

K. Not up to the competition — 110 47 80 5 133 43 125 164 24 182 / 118

L. Sweet-tooth desire — 165 30 187 59 121 44 10 183 114

M. Poorly constructed — 94 68 32 113 13 175 129

N. Incitement to action — 124 35 97 82 189 64 173 56 3

O. Salad staple — 131 185 9 73 109 140 166 28

P. What the fuzzy-minded want to reform — 105 157 8 186 48 120

Q. Battery "base" — 103 161 67 180 19 51

R. Ease up — 128 84 174 20 177 46

S. Imperativeness — 163 79 52 119 42 153 104

T. Lookouts — 162 31 69 154 85 18 93 151

U. Unpleasant kind of spirit — 150 89 137 171 143 65 22

V. Buffoons — 112 95 58 179 39

W. Wound — 101 132 7 91 146 57

DIRECTIONS

The object of TRANS-O-GRAM is to fill in the puzzle diagram by guessing the words from their definitions, and transferring each letter of the guessed word to the correspondingly numbered square in the diagram. When the diagram is filled in it will spell out a quotation from some published work (reading normally from left to right, black boxes indicating the ends of words); also, when the words have all been filled in above, their initial letters will spell out the author and title of the quoted work. The acrostic feature, and the relative word-lengths in the diagram, will assist in the solution. Spelling and definitions on the authority of *Webster's New International Dictionary*, Second Edition. **See page 58 for solution to last Trans-O-Gram.**

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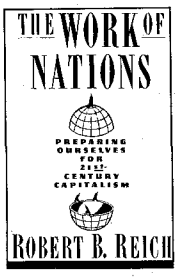

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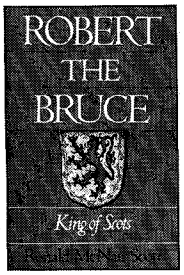

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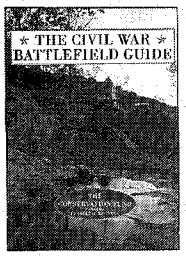

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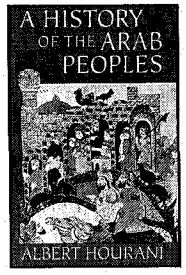

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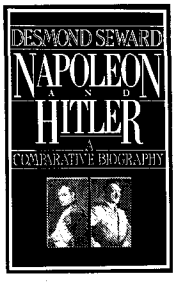

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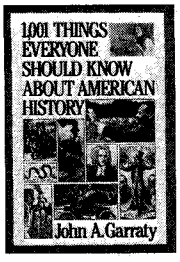

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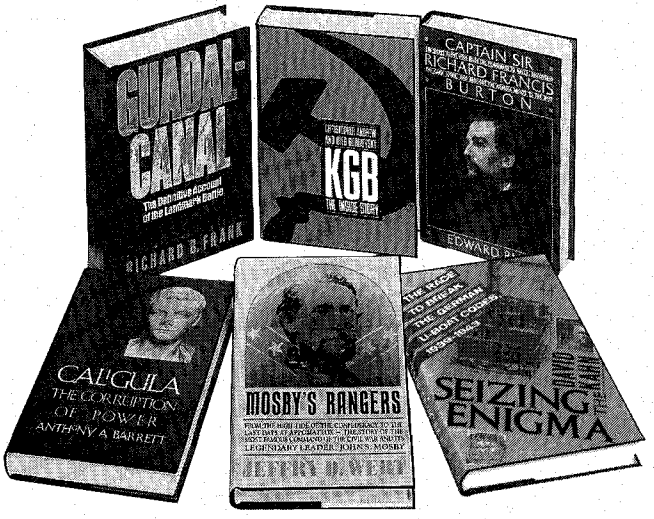

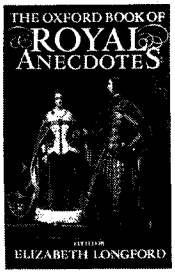

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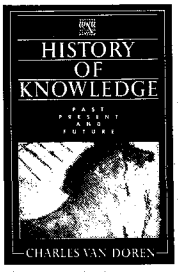

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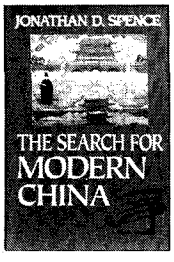

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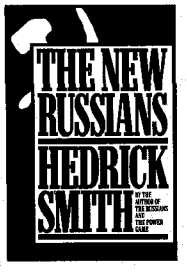

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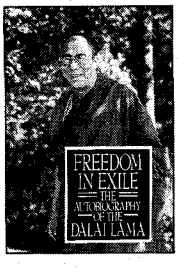

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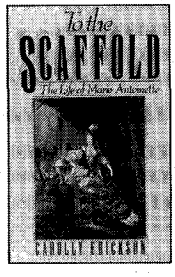

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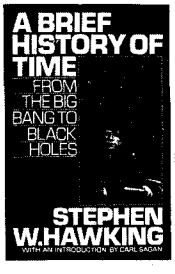

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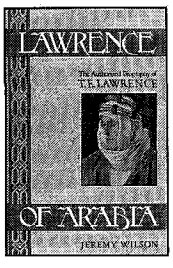

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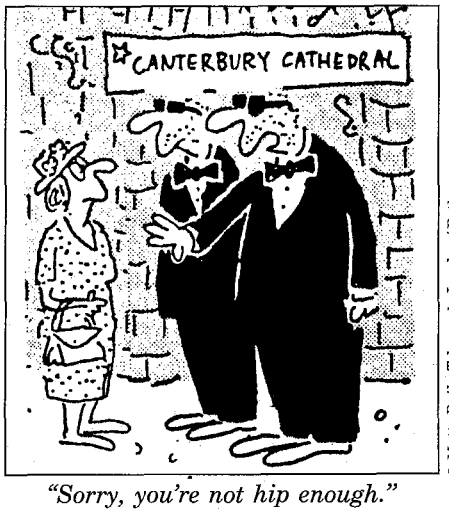
FOR THE RECORD

■ Withdrawal of **Al Gore** from presidential race, on the heels of **Jay Rockefeller**, on the heels of **Richard Gephardt**, had left Democratic strategists catatonic—even before Soviet Union blew apart. Says former DNC Chairman **John White**: "I'd like to see some of our major figures [**Lloyd Bentsen**, **Mario Cuomo**] just gut up and do it." But he adds, "The driven guys with fire in the belly, like **Hubert Humphrey** and **Lyndon** [**Johnson**] are gone." . . . "It's hard to think of a Democrat, running or not," says U. of Rochester political scientist **Larry Bartels**, "who could even make a good shot at a credible campaign in this [post-Soviet-coup] atmosphere." . . . Democratic leaders are conscious that five strikeouts in last six times at bat have damaged party. (The only Democratic President voters age 18 to 25 have known is **Jimmy Carter**.) Democratic pollster **Celinda Lake** notes that political habits formed in youth can linger a very long time.

■ Unexpectedly shaky is continued Democratic hold on black vote. Virginia Governor **Douglas Wilder**, whose entry into presidential lists is expected momentarily, is campaigning as fiscal and racial moderate. Some of his stands, as reported in recent *Christian Science Monitor* story: He favors the line-item veto. He finds spending cuts and elimination of layers of bureaucracy preferable to higher taxes. On helping blacks: "Why should an agenda for blacks be different from the agenda for the American people?" On black English: "It's a cop-out. . . . Blacks learn like everyone else and should be taught like everyone else." . . . His candidacy will be a far cry from **Jesse Jackson**'s last time around. And it's uncertain whether Jackson will be a candidate in '92. **Thomas Edsall** of *Washington Post* reports that Jackson's Rainbow Coalition is in a state of disrepair, with many local branches out of business. . . . **Clarence Thomas**'s nomination is having unexpected reverberations in black community. Black columnist **William Raspberry** of *Washington Post* says: "I hear [Thomas] saying with Wilder that blacks are foolish to wait for whites to deliver us, that we must return to the old values that worked for us in harsher times than these." . . . And in a column titled "Why Are They Surprised at Thomas's Conservatism?" in radical *Guardian*, **Earl Ofari Hutchinson** comments: "Like them or not, Thomas's views form a hitherto hidden part of the black experience. . . . The truth is that conservative values and goals have been deeply embedded in African-American life for generations. The problem is that most white Americans never recognized this. Instead they created a myth of black liberalism." What is most astonishing is that the argument was made in a journal in far left field.

■ Militant gays are becoming increasingly disruptive within leftist organizations. At Chicago conference of pro-Marxist-rebel CISPES (Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador) militant homosexuals celebrated an organizational victory with public gay and lesbian "kiss-in." . . . *New York Guardian* reports *New York Post* editor **Jerry Nachman** met with members of GLAAD (Gay and Lesbian Alliance against Defamation) to discuss coverage of gay events by the *Post*. Among GLAAD demands: dismissal of columnists **Pat Buchanan** and **Ray Kerrison**, whom GLAAD spokesman **Kirk Billett** described as "two right-wing extremists, homophobic and fixated on gays." . . . Seven progressive groups in Philadelphia are urging Federal Communications Commission not to renew licenses of 13 local radio stations accused of insufficient coverage of AIDS, gay, feminist, and Latino stories. . . . At its recent Miami Beach meeting the incurably leftist NEA added to its usual social agenda (pro abortion, anti gun lobby, etc.) a denunciation of military policies on homosexuals; it boycotted a Boy Scout exhibition (because of the Scouts' "insensitivity" toward homosexuals); and, lest we forget, it abominated the nomination of Clarence Thomas.



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"Sorry, you're not hip enough."

■ International Left is making final, convulsive gestures of support for Cuba's beleaguered **Fidel Castro**. Spearheaded by French Communist Party, Communist organizations in Germany, Cyprus, Denmark, Italy, Portugal, Switzerland, and Luxembourg are raising money to buy tanker filled with oil to give to Cuba. . . . **Dorothea Piermont**, head of delegation from Strasbourg that recently visited Havana, hopes to get European Parliament to denounce long-standing U.S. blockade of Cuba.

■ International scoreboard following anti-**Gorbachev** coup: **Winners** (in no particular order): **Bush**, **Thatcher**, **Genscher**, **Major**, **Landsbergis**, **Herbert Hoover** (whose post-WWI European relief efforts may be model for this winter's Soviet humanitarian relief). **Losers:** Socialists **François Mitterrand**, **Jacques Delors**, French Foreign Minister **Roland Dumas**; Communists **Georges Marchais**, **Gus Hall**, Castro, Afghan President **Najibullah**; assorted Arabs, **Muammar Qaddafi**, **Yasir Arafat**, **Saddam Hussein**; and, back home in Boston (where else?), **Frank Neisser** of the Workers World Party, who deplores the "pro-capitalism" takeover of the Soviet government as "an attempt to overturn all the gains the Soviet workers have made in the past seventy years."

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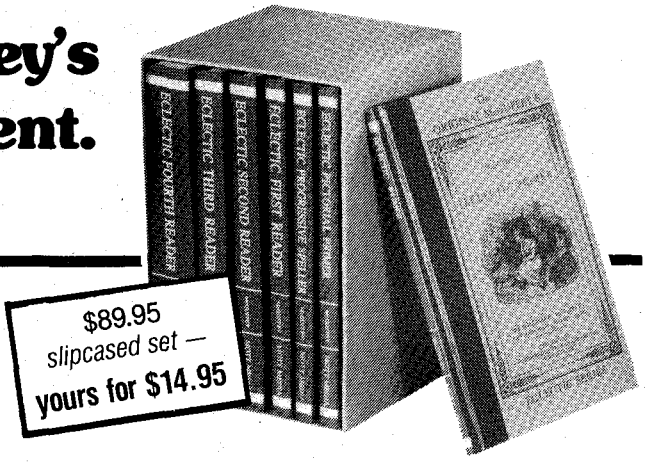

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The World Turned Right Side Up

IT IS a cliché of history that revolutions are followed by reactions. In the August Revolution, the reaction came first. Communist hard-liners, dismayed by the course of events, had already attempted to derail reform with a crackdown in Lithuania last winter. But they had not reckoned with the force of popular resistance. Then, in the spring, a push to unseat Boris Yeltsin brought vast demonstrations and Gorbachev scurrying back toward the reformers. The fruit of their collaboration was a Union treaty redefining the relationships of the Republics and the center. In all the years of *perestroika*, this would have been the first serious institutional reform, spelling the end of any chance of a return to Communist orthodoxy. The empire struck back for one last time. The effect was to accelerate the tempo of reform immensely—and to put the reformers at the forefront of the process, instead of acting as uneasy junior partners to Gorbachev.

It seems inevitable in retrospect that the putsch would fail. The grey suits and grey faces of the putschmeisters gave off an aura of defeat even as they held their press conference. The technological resources of dissidents and democrats proved too numerous for the hard-liners to squelch. Telephones, faxes, and satellite uplinks kept the whole world watching and the freedom-fighters in touch with one another. (One cell of putsch resisters was working the phones from within the Kremlin itself, down the hall from Gennady Yanayev's office.) Too many people had seen too much, said too much, and done too much to be willing to go back to an Ice Age of totalitarianism.

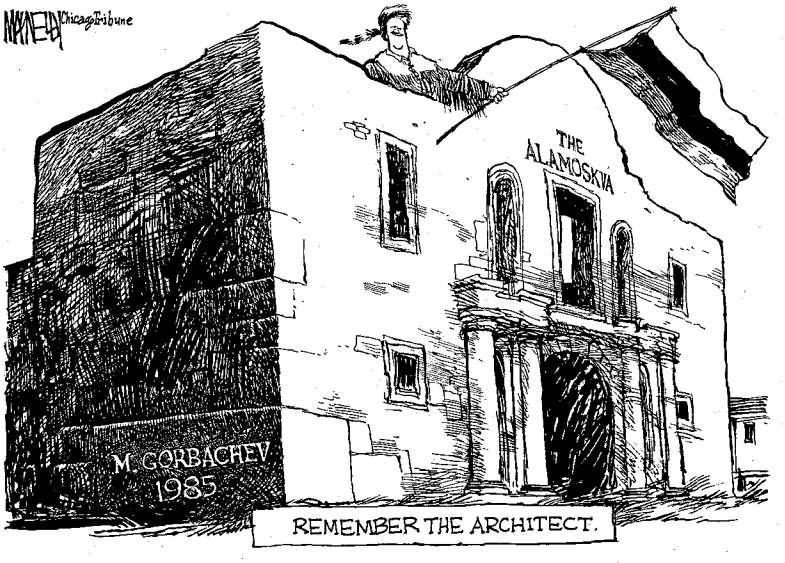
This Soviet pluralism, we should concede, was the legacy of Mikhail Gorbachev. A reform Communist, he did not want or foresee a truly free society. But his actions set the Soviet Union on the road to one; and as it developed in directions he had not chosen, he refrained from violence to halt it. Even as Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn laid a rose on the grave of Nikita Khrushchev, we must pay this tribute.

Boris Yeltsin, however, deserves a bouquet. Beginning as an earnest *apparatchik* offended by Party privileges, he developed into a principled champion of freedom. The Union treaty that triggered the putsch was his work; so are the sweeping post-putsch reforms. The hard-liners collapsed as swiftly as they did because, at the crucial moment, Yeltsin scrambled atop a tank and persuaded the world that the coup could be resisted. His courage and presence of mind transformed one tank into an army.

The final heroes were the people who rallied around the Russian White House and the soldiers who refused to shoot their fellow countrymen. For years, the Russians bore the onus of a people who did not deserve, because they did not desire, freedom. Their past was autocracy; their future was Communism. August 1991 puts that libel to rest. Russians, it turns out, are like people everywhere, capable of choosing good as well as ill. Last month, they fought to preserve the limited freedoms they had been allowed—and, in doing so, they won freedom in full measure. Can they keep it?

Unintended Republics

AS MATTERS STAND—and they are changing hourly—the best answer is a qualified and cautious yes. The USSR is being reconstituted on a freer, looser, more democratic, and more realistic basis. Power now lies with the Republics; Gorbachev—if he accepts the logic of the new situation—becomes more and more the figurehead. The abrupt cancellation of his initial interim cabinet appointments; his repudiation of the Communist Party two days after his news conference proclaiming his loyalty to it; his co-signing of the new plan



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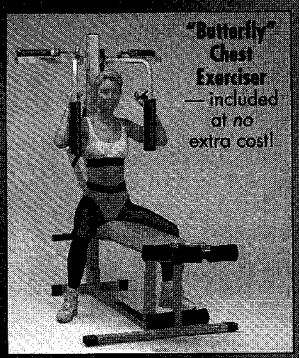

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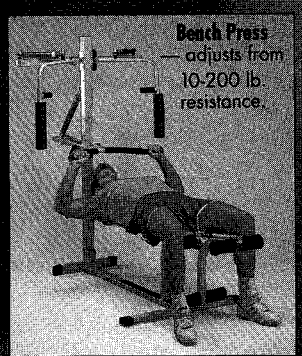

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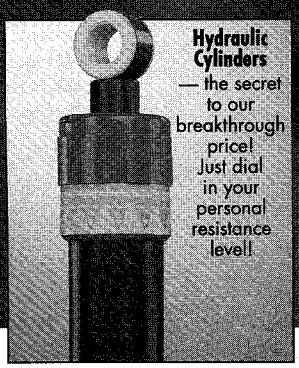

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for restructuring the Soviet Union which ratifies the emasculation of the central authority—these events confirm the new reality. The central government is being reduced to a weak national authority, nominally in charge of foreign affairs, defense, and some other basic functions, but in fact beholden to the constituent Republics, which will collectively determine its policies.

The Russians, who are in a position to dominate the new structure, are so far playing by the rules. To hold any semblance of a union together, Yeltsin has had to give the other Republics adequate reassurances. At least ten of those Republics seem to share the same interest in the continuing existence of a central authority, in whose policies they will have an equal voice; none of them, not even Russia, wants a strong central government, which they all see as contrary to the very democratic pluralism and economic decentralization for which they have so long struggled. Western concerns about the "privatization" of Soviet nuclear weapons are addressed thus: the country's nuclear arsenal will remain intact, under central authority, while its massive conventional forces are being shrunk and divided up along Republic lines. The Republics, many of which (like the Ukraine) much prefer to be nuclear-free, are satisfied by a share in decision-making.

The West can welcome all this. With the Baltic states completely split off, and other Republics seeking UN membership and varying degrees of real independence, our erstwhile adversary will have become a political and economic structure eminently suited to addressing the country's problems in a democratic fashion, but entirely ineffective for committing or threatening aggression abroad.

There are, however, serious threats to the new democracy: economic collapse, Communist bureaucrats still in place, ethnic rivalry, military forces resentful of their loss of pre-eminence. Another coup down the road cannot be ruled out. How ironic, then, that since the coup Yeltsin, democracy's defender, has become the target of disparaging comments from the Administration, casting doubt on his democratic credentials. We find it odd for the Administration so to demean a man who was dumped from the Party leadership because he attacked the Party's privileges, in favor of another who reiterated his continuing faith in Communism the day after his release from Crimean captivity. Yeltsin has also allegedly contributed to the breakup of the Union and invited chaos. Again, we note that Yeltsin is the *only* man in a position to hold the Soviet Union together on any basis—after years of Gorbachev's heavy-handed bungling on this score—and that he is holding it together on the basis of democracy, a free market, and a foreign policy that promises to be even more conciliatory than Gorbachev's.

Prudence argues that, if the Bush Administration has a dim view of Yeltsin, it should keep that opinion to itself. Even more, we question the analysis. Yeltsin's victory is the victory of all the peoples of the former Union. It is the victory of democracy and peace. It is the victory of ordinary common humanity over utopian zeal and bureaucratic rule.

A Paradise Well Lost

NOW THAT Marxism–Leninism is finally consigned to that dustbin of history it prescribed for others, we can attempt to put it into historical perspective. It represented an impressive effort to harness, systematize, and give organized political power to powerful nineteenth-century utopian impulses. Beneath the crust of its conventions and manners, the nineteenth century seethed with a tropical growth of personal and public rebellions. There was anarchism, socialism, free love, vegetarianism, prohibitionism, Shakerism, and eccentric communities of all sorts.

What Marxism accomplished was to discipline those utopianisms and give them a pseudo-scientific purchase upon the "inevitable" course of history. The Marxist consolidation of the varied utopian impulses may now be seen as a large iceberg in the way of Western civilization. Some tens of millions of lives later, however, the Marxist iceberg drifted into warmer historical waters and with astounding rapidity began to melt. All of a sudden it is gone.

But the nineteenth-century utopian impulses that underlie Marxism are unlikely to disappear as quickly. In the approaching future they will take fresh forms: ecology fascism, health fascism, forbidden-speech codes, radical feminism, reverse racism, "multiculturalism," and so on. Where Marxism claimed the mantle of scientific efficiency, these less disciplined utopias stress less falsifiable themes such as "sensitivity" or "fairness." Where Marxists placed their faith in a politically conscious proletariat, the new utopians seek to create an alliance of minorities and outsiders such as gays, feminists, and the discontented of every stripe.

Yet traditional Marxists and the new utopians agree in seeking to use the power of the state to realize their daydreams and enforce their passions. Our domestic utopians have enjoyed more success in this than anyone would have considered possible thirty years ago. They have persuaded government to adopt racial quotas, busing, educational fads, and burdensome regulations of all kinds. In social life they have employed largely bogus concepts of "sexism" to make people feel guilty about traditional sexual roles and attitudes. And they have in general succeeded in making government action seem the obvious solution to almost any social problem.

With the collapse of Communism, however, such ideas are likely to lose much of their power. They

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were propelled in large measure by the widespread feeling, even found among their opponents, that this coercive utopianism somehow represented the future of mankind. And the more news comes out of Moscow revealing the terrible human consequences of the Communist brand of utopianism, the more utopian politics in general will be discredited. Thus, as the new utopians' causes provoke mounting inconvenience, irritation, and expense in everyday American life, so political resistance to them is likely to grow—and to grow more confident.

Now that the forced march to Utopia has been called off amid reports of flies, swamps, and nonexistent plumbing, package tours there will lose much of their appeal.

A World Restored

IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS a Soviet retrenchment has been under way for a number of years. Western solidarity and Soviet economic weakness still dictate a policy of accommodation. What the failure of the August coup has done is to cripple the forces within the Soviet system that resisted those constructive trends. Traditional Soviet clients—Cuba, Afghanistan, Vietnam, the PLO, and other unsavory radicals—can see the handwriting on the wall; their patrons within the Soviet military and Party apparatus are now mostly unemployed if not in jail. Andrei Kozyrev, now Yeltsin's foreign minister, was one of the leaders, a few years ago, among Soviet diplomats who repudiated the thuggery and adventurism of the Brezhnev foreign policy. His kind will now call the tune.

The world may now become, as Charles Krauthammer has written, a "unipolar" one—there can be no doubt the United States is the only superpower. Given America's lack of eagerness and aptitude for hegemonic policies, however, it may become more the multipolar world that others have long heralded—a world in which America, Europe, Japan, China, the USSR (now way down in the league standings), and various Third World powers grope for new patterns of coexistence and cooperation. But the decision will be ours.

In making it we will find out who our friends are. Apparently not the French Socialists, who have already (in the persons of Roland Dumas and Jacques Delors) announced their alarm at an America that has no counterweight. But this attitude will be no more than a minor irritant. The Gulf War and the brief Soviet coup demonstrated that Europe's security still depends on the United States, and efforts to extend European integration to the security field have foundered on the contradictions among the Europeans themselves. Most Europeans, East and West, find a strong American presence far preferable to the dominance of any of their fellow Europeans.

The moral effect of the Moscow August will be a fresh breeze of democracy around the globe. The threat to Castro, Najibullah, Kim Il-Sung, Assad, et al. is not simply the cutoff of Soviet aid but the evaporation of the last illusion that their styles of government have a special permanence, or any shred of legitimacy. "Socialism" is no longer available as an excuse that anyone takes seriously; history is no longer available as evidence of inevitability. What the revolution of 1989 began is now underscored. Just as Marxist revolutionaries in the past took heart from the success of their brothers, now the moral tide is with the West and its ideals of political and economic freedom.

It will be a somewhat chaotic world. Freedom is a chaotic kind of thing. Ethnic turmoil is inevitable, and tragic. Once the post-1945 taboo against border changes is broken, there will be no end to disputes—including disputes among what once were units of the Soviet empire. The world community should do its best to facilitate peaceful solutions. Yet these difficulties cannot be used as a justification for situations of patent injustice or repression. No stability lies that way either.

The task of statesmen is to see to the basic structure of world politics. If relations among the major powers are solid and stable, no Sarajevo can precipitate world war. If America remains in Europe as a reassurance to those who fear domination by any power in Europe (whether Germany or a restored Russia), then Europe will be secure. If America retains the military strength globally to deter the Saddam Husseins, then the world will be secure. Not all local instabilities will be of strategic importance; a few will be. We can handle such a burden without strain. It will be a world in which all enemies of freedom will be on the defensive. It will be a world of some turbulence, to be sure, but not a world of which America need be afraid. Quite the contrary. It will be, in large measure, an American world.

—THE EDITORS

And Then There Were 15

Dear Mr. Bush:

Though out of one
Have come the many, which must stun
A man accustomed to confer
With central boards and, once, a her,
I hope the current messy mix
Won't lead to any facial tics
As Gorby goes and Deng, now ill.
Plays kick-the-bucket.

Fondly, Bill

W. H. VON DREELE

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THE WEEK

■ Lenin would never have believed this. And Walter Duranty wouldn't have reported it.

■ "Socialism is not an annual; it is a perennial." So says Gus Hall, eighty-year-old patriarch of the U.S. Communist Party. Unfazed by recent developments, Gus insists that worldwide Communist revolution is not dead; it has merely taken a "detour." Meanwhile, he offers this cheery travel tip: "If you want a nice vacation, take it in North Korea." (Thanks, but we've got other plans.) At any rate, Gus seems to be the one Communist leader whose job is safe these days. Only in America, comrade.

■ With the Communist Party now illegal and the Soviet Union gone, Mikhail Gorbachev might give the Democrats a thought. For one thing, in sharp contrast to most of the Democratic Party's would-be or would-have-been presidential contenders—Paul Tsongas, Tom Harkin, and even Sam Nunn—Gorby was on the right side of the Gulf War. He's just ethnic enough to give Mario Cuomo and Doug Wilder a run for their money. And unlike Jerry Brown, he could carry California.

■ In all the outrage over the television ad attacking three senators on the Judiciary Committee, which will shortly begin hearings on High Court nominee Clarence Thomas, no one has said it contains any falsehood. And with good reason. For its allegations (about which the media have been waxing indignant but vague) are merely reruns of what has already been in the papers, or publicly broadcast in Senate hearings, or even admitted by the senators. As for its central proposition that Senators Biden, Cranston, and Kennedy are morally unfit to sit in judgment on Clarence Thomas, that is plainly a matter of opinion. At least one of the senators would have a hard time convincing us he could sit in judgment on Willie Horton. We can't help contrasting the current brouhaha, however, with the media's complicity in the thoroughly mendacious campaign against Judge Robert Bork, when their outrage was directed against the victim rather than the perpetrators. Not the least bad result of that debacle was the replacement of serious deliberation over the judicial qualities of a nominee with outright character assassination. That has now provoked retaliation in the form of the ad. Momentous though it would be, confirming Clarence Thomas would be only half a victory. The full victory will come when the next nominee is put through without benefit of a circus.

■ Meanwhile, Bush's nomination of White House aide and supply-side economist Lawrence Lindsey to the Federal Reserve has foundered on the rock of Senator Terry Sanford (D., N.C.). Apart from Mr. Lindsey's own considerable merits, the appointment is important because, of the seven seats on the Fed, only five are now filled, and Chairman Alan Greenspan serves with a special recess appointment. The unwritten rule being that one doesn't oppose a Federal Reserve nominee over policy, Senator Sanford has marshaled every nitpicking clause he can find to keep this nomination bottled up. Although all the paperwork was signed, sealed, and delivered by February, the hearings didn't begin until May (after a false start)—hearings which the senator did not even bother to sit in on. Then, when the 16 to 5 committee vote still went the other way, Senator Sanford further delayed by asking for a formal report, with himself writing the minority report, only now filed, on the very last day possible; all this to prevent a vote on the Senate floor (which may be stalled further if the senator decides to put a hold on the nomination). A spokesman for Sanford's office says the senator opposes Lindsey on the grounds that he isn't really a Southerner, since his residence is in Clifton, Virginia, which is just part of Washington. But we suspect that to Senator Sanford any monetarist would be a carpetbagger.

■ WALSH WATCH: Empires may pass, nations perish, and new ones take their place, but of one institution we may always be sure: Lawrence E. Walsh's "temporary" Iran–Contra inquiry. Mr. Walsh, old-timers will recall, took up his post the year after Mr. Gorbachev assumed his, but is a good bet to hold on longer. Mr. Walsh's latest brush with relevance: the promise of forthcoming indictments of three CIA officials. Colleagues of the hounded officials have in turn set up a Legal Defense Fund (P. O. Box 309, Merrifield, Va. 22116), to which of course Mr. Walsh

Notes from the Periphery

Among the yaks, where yoghurt still
Benumbs the gut and soothes the ill,
The folks who gave us Genghis Khan
Composed a marvelous "Dear John"
To Commies in Ulan Bator,
Which turned Peking's ambassador
From yellow to a bilious blue:
Now there's a pretty how-de-do.

W. H. VON DREELE

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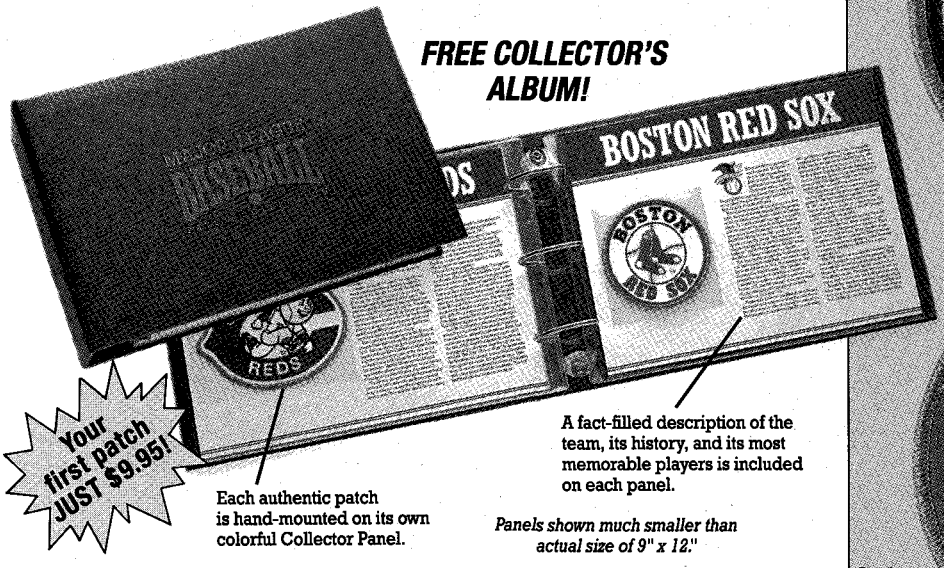
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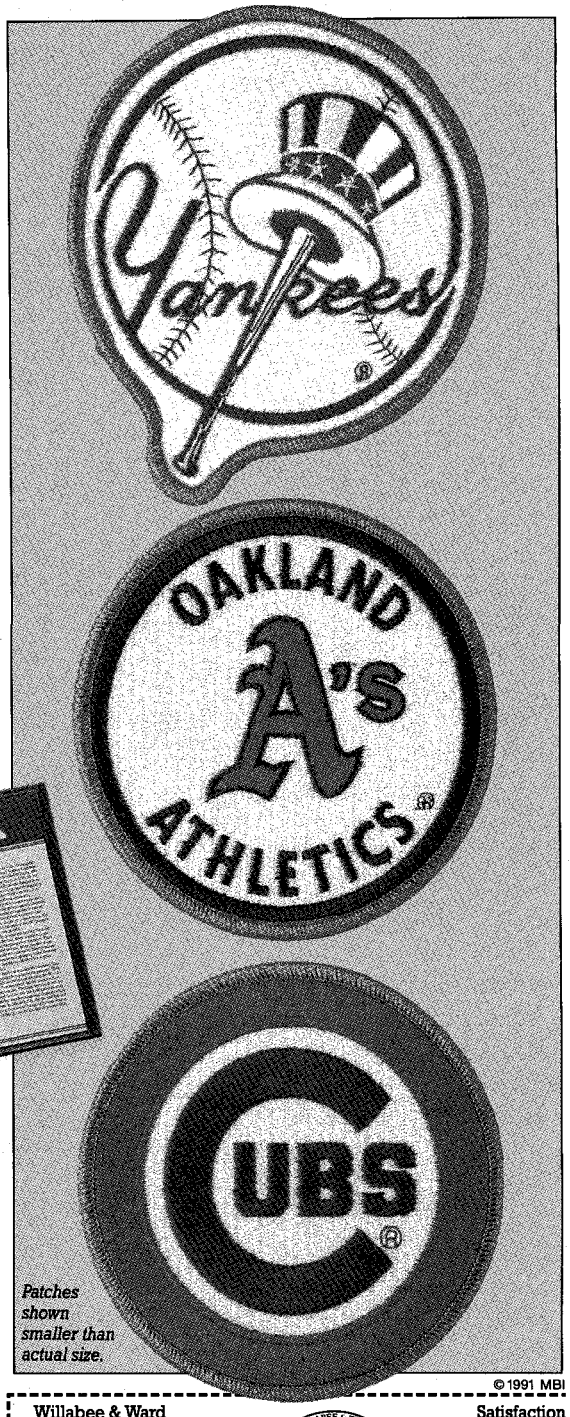

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has objected on "ethical grounds." The conscientious prosecutor's own tab? At $40,000-plus a day in office expenses, about $50 million. Or enough to feed the Ukraine for a cold winter week.

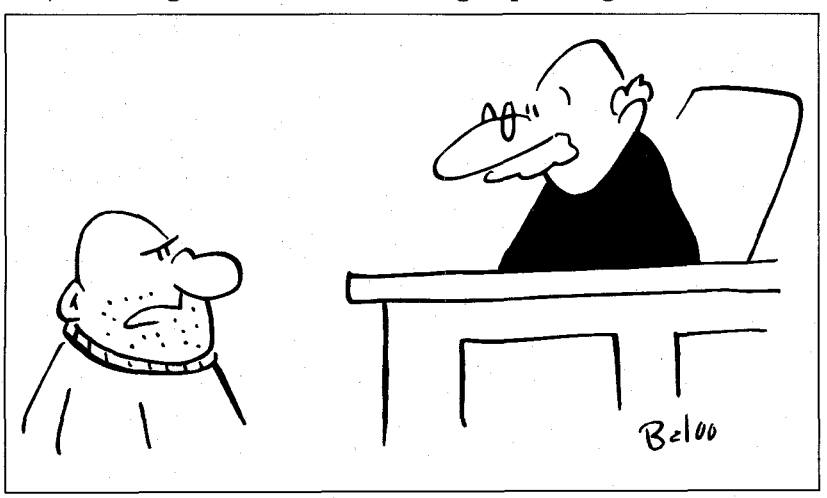
■ The Libertarian Party, meeting in Chicago, chose as its 1992 presidential candidate Andre Marrou, a 52-year-old Las Vegas real-estate broker of conservative demeanor. The general coloration of the Libertarians is changing from hippie to yuppie: though they want drugs and abortion legal, they stress that this means neither approval nor government funding. Marrou's central issue will be taxes: he wants to abolish the income tax and send the IRS the way of the KGB. The prospect of a Bush landslide bodes well for the Libertarians: disgruntled Republicans, conservatives, and others who have had it with big government will feel free to vote paradigmatically, rather than as a Democrat-prevention measure. The collapse of Communism helps the Libertarians too: old foreign-policy anxieties are gone, and the spectacle of one slain leviathan is downright inspiring to those oppressed by another. Not exactly our cup of tea, the Libertarians, but someone has to keep the Republicans honest, and it won't be the Democrats.

■ BUST WATCH: Since our initial dispatch from this front, *NR* has heard that the absence of former Vice President Spiro Agnew's marble bust in the U.S. Capitol appears not to be an oversight. Over the years the matter has been brought to the attention of the Capitol Architect's office, which looks after the busts of Schuyler Colfax, Henry Wilson, James Schoolcraft Sherman, and the other distinguished statesmen in our vice-presidential pantheon. All 43 are there, except Agnew. Nor does anyone recall investing the Capitol's upper-level maintenance personnel with authority to exclude Vice Presidents of whom they do not approve. Whatever reservations might be troubling the ethicists in the Architect's office, the arguments for including Spiro Agnew amount in all their philosophical complexity to this: he was Vice President.

■ A Mr. Derek Humphry is making too much money from a book he wrote about committing suicide to live up to his principles.

■ Sort of missing the point, a team of Harvard economists has gone to Russia with a plan. That's the one thing the USSR never had a shortage of.

■ Well, Fidel, we're back to socialism in one country.



"We all know I'm a criminal—you don't have to rub it in!"

NOTES & ASIDES

We Won

IN THE first issue of NATIONAL REVIEW, published on November 19, 1955, we announced that we were "irrevocably" at war against Communism, and that we would oppose any substitute for victory. Thirty-six years later, Communism was banned within the Soviet Union.

It was a very long haul, and although Richard Nixon, writing a year ago and perhaps anticipating the delirious events of the last ten days in August 1991, was substantially correct when he said that the West didn't win the war, the Communists lost it, that verdict has to be qualified to make room for major and minor players. Where, to drop perhaps the biggest single name of them all, would we have been without Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn? He and a dozen other major figures from the Soviet Union earned their places in Freedom's House of Lords. The crowds in Russia, descendants of the men and women who stormed the Winter Palace, placed themselves between the Soviet tanks and the White House that sheltered Boris Yeltsin, and pledged their lives and their sacred honor to preserving the fetus of Russian constitutionalism. And they prevailed.

In the West there were, everywhere, steadfast friends of liberty, but by no means can it be said that they dominated the public policy of the West. That can be said of only one figure. It was Ronald Reagan, history is sure to confirm, who suddenly forced the leaders of Soviet Communism to look in the mirror, and what they beheld was their advanced emaciation. The other superpower, thought to have been castrated by the defeat in Vietnam, was deploying theater nuclear weapons in Europe, shattering any prospect of Soviet political ultimatums directed at Bonn, Paris, and London. Moreover, the

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leader of the bourgeois world was determined to launch a program which the technological genius of America would almost certainly permit absolutely to frustrate a Soviet first strike, and therefore any political advantage that might accrue from threatening such a strike. It was, moreover, the same leader who had resurrected the moral argument, so successfully etiolated by a generation of ambiguists. He spoke of the Soviet Union as an *evil empire*! He said that history would consign Communism to the ash heap: transforming Lenin's own words as an ode to historical determinism!

And then, quickly it began to take over. The war in Afghanistan, never mind that 1.4 million resisters had been killed, was not ending, and the same American President had authorized the use of a weapon that vitiated the usefulness of the Soviet air force. The economy was ceasing to move. A new Soviet leader, having recognized that Afghanistan would not be conquered, attempted to revive the morale of a deadened culture with injections of freedom, and its results were magical, the whole Soviet thinking world suddenly heard from, intoxicated by the *glasnost* license. Structural reforms were, if not permitted, at least debated. The final failure of the long design to overcome Europe, frustrated now by American nuclear missiles, vitiated the importance of continuing military colonization of Eastern Europe; and one after another they peeled off. The debated reforms brought a crisis, the sentiment hardening all over the land that there had to be not talk about reforms, but reforms; and on the eve of the first important one of these, a reconstitution of the Union of Soviet Socialist states, the dissenters raised their mailed fist in a final show of defiance. Within 48 hours, the mandarinate that controlled the principal instruments of force, the KGB and the military, fell. We would learn that the eight leaders who sought to stem the tide were during most of those critical hours drunk on vodka. They had for most of their lives been intoxicated by more noxious matter. Before the end of the week, the Communist Party was legally suspended.

We won.

I am uniquely situated to summon the memory of men and women associated with this journal, whose birth was substantially motivated by the historical calling for a moral-analytical journalistic distillery to animate the resistance to Communism. Mr. Nixon was right. We should have won the war against Communism before Yalta's first anniversary, and he was right in suggesting the many lost opportunities which, had we moved otherwise, might have spared millions their lives, and tens of millions those years of that terrible, empty grief that oppression brings. But this was the journal James Burnham spent 25 years with. It was here Whittaker Chambers came, however briefly, back to life, after pronouncing that in leaving Communism he had probably left the winning side. It was here that John Dos Passos, and Max Eastman, and Frank Meyer—I restrict myself to those men and women who are dead—labored, in this heady vineyard of anti-Communism, distilling, analyzing, pleading. October 20, 1956, an editorial, "The Ghosts Are Restless":

> Twenty years ago Communism seemed to reach an ultimate level of the macabre in the mad Purge Trials, with their self-destroying confessions of impossible deeds, and their aftermath of rubber-soled executions in the cellars of the Lubyanka. The Trials, however, sink back to the banal in the wild light of the unwinding process now going on in Eastern Europe.
>
> Seven years ago in Hungary four Communist leaders were put to death and buried in dishonored ground, as "bourgeois nationalists," Titoists, and agents of U.S. intelligence: the then–Foreign Minister, Laszlo Rajk, along with General Georgy Palffy, Dr. Tibor Szoeny, and Andras Szalai. Last week the rotted corpses of these four men were exhumed, exposed in great biers mounted in the center of Budapest, and made ready for reburial in a new cemetery designed as a national pantheon.
>
> The godless anti-religion of Communism is driven to complete the symbolic cycle of its black inversion of true religion. To its myriad rites of crucifixion, it now adds a blasphemous resurrection.
>
> On a single day two hundred thousand Hungarians walked past these biers—not by command in the usual Communist mode, but spontaneously, by individuals and family groups. They were silent, but what was in their hearts? Under totalitarian rule, where so little can be uttered, we must look deep. At the literal level the whole issue was from the mass point of view a senseless dispute between rival sets of jailers. For all the people knew, the exhuming was only an excuse for a new round of killings; with another shift in political line next year, the four corpses might be thrown in a lime pit.
>
> But surely those vast throngs were telling each other and us that it is their buried freedom that they mourn for, and its future resurrection for which they hope and wait.

Two weeks later, those Hungarians on whom James Burnham had his eye did exactly that: they resurrected their freedom. Three weeks later, they were mostly dead, run over by Russian tanks, some of them, others of them hanged or imprisoned.

But the spirit was regenerated, and every month, every year, the writers in NATIONAL REVIEW did what they could to press hope, and to maintain the moral perspective. We are justly proud that one of our readers became the leader of the Free World, who exercised the critical voice in the critical deliberations of the Eighties.

And, on bended knee, we give thanks to Providence for the transfiguration of Russia, thanks from those of us who lived to see it, and thanks to those, departed, who helped us to understand why it was right to struggle to sustain the cause of Western civilization.

—WFB

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AT THE REVOLUTION

Exhilaration and Fear in Moscow

ELISABETH RUBINFIEN

Tim Bower

Moscow

FOR DECADES, Moscow newlyweds visited the Lenin Hills, the tomb of the Unknown Soldier, and Lenin's Mausoleum for a bit of sentimental ritual immediately after signing their marriage documents.

In the days since the collapse of the coup, the autumn breeze tousles the brides' white veils at a new pilgrimage site: an underpass on the city's main Ring Road where three young men died last month resisting the tanks.

On the other side of Moscow, the headquarters of the Communist Party Central Committee—long spoken of in hushed tones—is shut down, windows darkened. The imposing statue of KGB founder Feliks Dzerzhinsky no longer stands in front of the Lubyanka. Communism is dead, and Boris Yeltsin is a hero.

While the rapidity of change leaves everyone breathless, some are skeptical about the depth of the changes. Is the Communist Party apparatus really uprooted or will it re-emerge in a new guise? Will Communism end only to bring a burst of brutal vengeance and the return of Russian domination?

The extraordinary session of the Congress of People's Deputies this week shows the strength of continued resistance to reform. Numerous speakers stood to criticize a plan for a new national structure worked out by Mikhail Gorbachev and representatives of 11 Republics in a long day of meetings on Sunday, September 1.

Betrayed by the hard-liners, Mr. Gorbachev has been driven to cooperate with Republics that no longer want to be subjugated to Moscow. Their plan states that until a new constitution and national structure are created, the central government will be supplanted by a state council of Mr. Gorbachev and the Republican leaders and an inter-Republican committee that will manage the economy. The standing parliament and Congress itself will be replaced by a council made up of twenty representatives from each Republic that chooses to join the Union. Those that prefer political independence can still elect to be part of a new economic union.

Many deputies openly opposed the plan—after all, to support it means to vote themselves out of existence. "In fact, the coup continues," charged Deputy Viktor Kiselev, protesting against the way the plan was summarily introduced in the Congress. "Stop treating the constitution as a whore," demanded Deputy Aleksandr Obolensky.

Some Communist-led Republics have used pro-independence rhetoric to mask a simple desire to cling to power. The six Republics that have long insisted on independence (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Georgia, Armenia, and Moldova) also long since evicted their Communist leadership. But a number of Republics where the Communist Party still dominated suddenly reversed their position on the Union and declared independence. Moscow democrats rolled their eyes at the declarations of Uzbekistan and Byelorussia, charging that the Communist leaders there want independence only to protect themselves from the democratic wave.

The very cynicism of such attempts at bureaucratic self-preservation, however, lends credence to the belief that the recent changes are deep. The misbegotten coup itself proved how Communist ideals here had degenerated into no more than a tenacious bureaucratic system of power. Even the putschists themselves didn't quote Communist slogans.

Mr. Gorbachev has already rightly taken much of the blame for surrounding himself with men so quick to betray him. But he also deserves credit for, during these past six years, removing the fear that paralyzed the Soviet people. The coup was the final proof of that transformation.

The coup attempt spurred hundreds of reform-minded Communists to resign from the Party post-haste despite fear of reprisals. Many had remained members simply because it was the only way to be part of the decision-making structure. At the influential Institute of World Economy and International Relations, according to a senior researcher there, "on the first day of the coup, no one was working. We were all busy writing our letters of resignation to the Party."

But while the Communist Party has been formally suspended, its web of personnel throughout Soviet life remains intact. For this reason, leading democrats now argue that the priority must be the complete de-Communization of society, not regional independence. Leningrad Mayor Anatoly Sobchak argues for the continuation of

Miss Rubinfien is a Moscow correspondent for the Wall Street Journal.

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a central government to complete the anti-Communist revolution. Russia must now export democratic revolutions to other Republics, such as the feudal Communist states of Soviet Central Asia, some democrats say. "The roots of the old totalitarian system are still there," said Mr. Yeltsin in an interview with CNN this week. "We have to pull them out."

Such talk makes some people in the non-Russian Republics nervous. They fear that Russia's proclaimed support for democracy is a cover for a new Russian imperialism. After some initial faltering, Mr. Yeltin has moved to reassure them. The Russian government has hastened to solidify ties with the Ukraine and Kazakhstan as a basis for the new Union. At the Congress, he urged that all 15 Republics join an economic union, that the military be under Union control, and that nuclear arms be managed by the center.

Mr. Gorbachev may also be a reassuring presence for the many *apparatchiks* who fear that the newly powerful democrats will take revenge against them. The mood in an office at the Institute of Labor captured it well. I talked with a researcher there who for months had been ostracized by her colleagues because of her liberal views. Many of her co-workers were close to former vice president and putschist Gennady Yanayev, who had been head of the official trade-union movement. On Monday, August 19, they gloated about the demise of *perestroika*. But by Thursday, said the liberal, pointing at her paper napkin, "their faces were as white as this." □

Strings Attached

RADEK SIKORSKI

VILNIUS

EIGHT telephones still stood on the desk in the Vilnius KGB chairman's office. An oil painting of Lenin glowered down from the wall. A shrine to Felix Dzerzhinsky nestled on the shelf. The ashes in the antique stove in the corner of the room contained burnt remains of several sheets of paper. I picked up the red telephone—the one set aside from the rest and with a Soviet coat of arms in place of a dial. There was nobody at the other end any more.

The Vilnius KGB stayed loyal and obedient to the end. In the dungeons, eighty cells had been spruced up to welcome the expected internees. But when Moscow bungled the show and the order was to give up rather than fight, the end was orderly. One thousand pistols and several dozen assault rifles were handed to the Lithuanian police in a matter of hours. The Vilnius station did the center one last favor. The archives, including lists of informers and files on hundreds of thousands of Lithuanians, were sent to Moscow in the nick of time.

The Moscow-appointed liquidator of the Vilnius KGB, Major General Ivan Vasilyevich Fedoseyev, is a polite, matter-of-fact, smiling fifty-year-old in a badly cut brown suit. If it weren't for his military haircut and his clumsy concealment of his knowledge of English, one could take him for a managing director of a ball-bearing plant. One of his tasks is to persuade the Republican authorities to guarantee the pension rights of former KGB personnel. Those KGB officers whose names were down on the list for an apartment will soon join the regular list with other citizens. Within one week, the most bloodthirsty organization in human history has been turned into a pack of diffident pensioners.

A sticker on a glass partition in the Vilnius Aeroflot office proclaims: "Lietuvos Arialinijos"—Lithuanian Airlines. The office belongs to the Soviet airline, Aeroflot, as do the ancient Soviet aircraft, the computers, the terminals, the control towers, and the uniforms of the staff. The fares and the destinations are still set in Moscow. But the Lithuanians sincerely believe that they already have their own national airline.

That is how Lithuanian independence was won. You run up a flag and carry on as if you were indeed an independent state. If you can stick it out through harassment and persuade a sufficient number of people that you are serious—you become independent after all. The Baltic case stands Marxist theory of the state on its head. If the state is merely the armed instrument of the economically dominant class, then Lithuanian freedom should have been fought for by the managers of collective farms and state enterprises. In fact, they were the last to acquiesce. Far from serving anybody's class interests, free Lithuania will still cost its founding fathers a great deal of worry and sacrifice. President Landsbergis—its George Washington—is no planter, banker, or manufacturer. Until three years ago, free Lithuania was merely a gleam in the eye of this music professor.

As is clear to the first tourists who come to this beautiful country, Lithuania has not done too badly out of the Soviet Union. Independent Lithuania is emerging with increased territory (the Vilnius region, Polish before the war, was handed over to Lithuania in 1940 as a sweetener for accepting Soviet rule), modernized infrastructure, and an educated population. Not since the early seventeenth century has the region enjoyed such prosperity.

While most of the credit has to go to the Lithuanians' enterprise and the patriotism of their Communist rulers, the fact remains that the Lithuanian investment program was possible only inside the crazy economy that was the Soviet Union. Lithuanian collective farms supply Moscow and Leningrad with a sizable proportion of their dairy products and meat. In return, Moscow supplies Vilnius with oil, gas, and raw materials at a tiny fraction of their world price. To economically illiterate Soviet bureaucrats this seems a fair exchange. But one day soon, when both Russia and Lithuania start pricing their goods in real currencies, Moscow will realize that its oil and gas can buy many times the amount of food in world markets.

Lithuania's goods, on the contrary, would not be competitive in the West even if fortress Europe were to open its gates. One giant factory near Vilnius produces oil pumps for Soviet tractors. Will it be easier for Lithuania to find new customers or for Russia to find different suppliers in a different market? In an economy of permanent shortages, Lithuania had the upper hand. In a buyer's market, it is the seller that has to chase after the customer.

Lithuania still reluctantly hosts So-

Mr. Sikorski is NR*'s roving correspondent.*

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viet troops; Lithuania is sure to be saddled with some of the Soviet Union's $60-billion foreign debt, as well as the assets of former all-Union enterprises. The convulsion that is currently shaking Eastern Europe has not gripped it yet because the cure for the cancer of a planned economy has not been applied. The vast economic dislocation that will come in the wake of free prices—recession, unemployment, inflation—is just around the corner. To tackle it, Lithuania needs a finance minister who has at least occasionally read the *Wall Street Journal*.

Even so, economic hardship is a price well worth paying to become a master in one's own home. It is well worth sacrificing microwave ovens, refrigerators, and holidays on the Black Sea for the knowledge that no cells need to be spruced up for your return. Independent Lithuania has taken off, but it will be a long time yet before "Letuvos Arialinijos" will fly their own Boeings to wherever they please. □

At Yeltsin's Side

MASSIMO CALABRESI

Moscow

ON the afternoon of Monday the 19th, resistance to the coup seemed utterly futile. Union troops in light and heavy tanks and armored personnel carriers lined the main streets of the city. The Parliament building of the Russian Republic (RSFSR) was defended only by a few flimsy barricades of planks and paving stones and by several hundred supporters of Russian President Boris Yeltsin. Crowds of onlookers milled around the perimeter of the complex, rubbernecking at what seemed to be just another diversion. One jaded Muscovite asked, "Yes, but what does all this mean for *my* life?"

President Yeltsin's tank-top defiance answered that question. Word of it spread through the city; by late that afternoon people manning the barricades had befriended Union tank crews; many of them climbed onto the turrets of the vehicles to embrace their adversaries and pose for photographs. One young child sat on the lap of a soldier manning a mounted high-caliber machine gun and received lessons in how to aim.

By evening two battalions of tank crews from the Taman region had defected to Mr. Yeltsin's cause. They took up positions around the complex as a growing crowd of civilians cheered. The flimsy barricades were reinforced with disabled trucks and large pipes brought by crane from nearby construction sites (where work, in good Soviet fashion, had been going on for more than three years). A crowd of several thousand supporters formed a human chain around the building.

That night the Parliament building became the center for Soviet subcultures, as various groups camped out in the heavy rain: anarchists, numbering less than a dozen, hung their black flag in an obscure entry nook; a gang of four or five motorcyclists raced back and forth between the barricades; groups of students with long hair sat around playing popular anthems on beaten-up old guitars.

This eclectic group—with the support of the Taman battalions—defended the RSFSR complex for the night; by morning, word of Mr. Yeltsin's successful defiance and of the support from other Republics drew an enormous crowd for the noon rally. In contrast to the onlookers of the day before, there wasn't an apathetic or indifferent person to be found. The crowd waved Russian Republic flags, chanted "Freedom!" and "Prosecute them!" and let out roaring cheers for the speakers, including two priests, a local comedian, and Yelena Bonner, Andrei Sakharov's widow.

By Tuesday night the organization of the coup resisters had been streamlined: squadrons of militiamen patrolled the human chains, now three deep, and instructed supporters in civil-disobedience tactics; gas masks were distributed to many along the barricades, and food was passed out at various points during the night.

The resolve of the crowd likewise hardened. Correspondents for the BBC and Agence France Presse had to wait for close to an hour for the designated authorities to instruct the human chain to let them into the building. Muscovites along the chain said they would stay all night, and some said they would stand their ground if fired upon: they were afraid, of course, but didn't believe the troops would fire on them. When shots were heard nearby, the lines held their ground, and after raising a deafening roar of protest became utterly silent in order to hear the instructions of their leaders.

Anatoly Manochin, a deputy of the Russian Parliament, described the first conflict with the troops who killed three men Tuesday night. He was the leader of a group of deputies sent to try to convince the soldiers that they were acting illegally. Driving north on the Ring Road, they met a column of tanks moving south at high speed. They turned around, overtook the column, and pulled in front of the tanks, stopping them. The deputies jumped from the car and ran toward the tanks, brandishing their ID cards. They attempted to talk to the troops, who responded by pulling their tanks slowly up to the deputies' chests. As the tanks began to accelerate the deputies jumped out of the way. Several yards down the road civilians had formed a human blockade; after aiming their guns at them and then firing in the air, the soldiers used the same driving technique, first slow and then fast, to pull through the crowd. A hundred yards later the tanks, halted by a blockade of trams, used the tactic again; three young men, Vladimir Usov, Ilya Krichevsky, and Dmitri Komar, stood their ground and were killed.

While many factors were crucial, the simple act of defiance by Soviet citizens, including those in the military, was the foundation for the defeat of the coup. One member of a tank crew that had joined Yeltsin's side Monday, when asked if he would fire if fired upon, said the troops had arrived without ammunition. None of the defecting tanks or troops had a single bullet to use in defense of the Parliament building. They, like the anarchists, bikers, and students, were armed with nothing but defiant will.

On Wednesday, the small grey blimp which had been flying the flag of the Russian Republic high above the Parliament building was pulled down by its tether several times; on its way back up it carried the flags of

Mr. Calabresi is a freelance writer based in Moscow.

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other Republics eager to join the countercoup.

Inside, newly arrived computers and copiers were being rolled through the corridors. Satellite dishes had appeared on top of the Parliament building. The session of the Congress of People's Deputies of the RSFSR which was meeting inside was being broadcast over loudspeakers to the crowd of ten thousand outside.

The crowd was unmistakably confident: they all—toothless old ladies, young men, mothers holding their infants, homeless vagrants—cheered and raised their hands to participate in the voting with the deputies as the proceedings came over the speakers.

One deputy, Mikhail Dmitriev of Leningrad, felt an extraordinary change in the public attitude toward politics: "I am completely sure that today is the birthday of civil society in this country. What is important is that people who were never educated in respect of rule of law now understand that rule of law is the basis for society. Now everybody will understand, and if anyone does not, everybody around him will explain." He called it a cleansing of the Soviet mind. The tenacious inertia imposed by Communism, by the idea that individual initiative is not just counterproductive but criminal, has been washed away by the demand for freedom. □

Neighborly Reactions

MARTIN WEISS

PRAGUE

WHEN THE news of the state of emergency in Moscow reached Central Europe, it seemed that the most feared scenario was coming true. The former satellite countries live in fear of the economic collapse of the Soviet Union.

The last Soviet soldiers left Hungary and Czechoslovakia in June, but in addition to hundreds of thousands of troops in former East Germany, 45,000 Soviet soldiers remain in Poland. Furthermore, a wave of refugees from the East could not be ruled out.

When news of the coup arrived, both Poland and Czechoslovakia immediately established special high-level task forces to monitor the situation. President Havel issued a proclamation to his nation on Monday, August 19, as did President Walesa; the latter also, as he revealed later, immediately ordered the army to prepare for mobilization. Both countries reinforced their border protection. Hungary, however, whose border with the USSR is just nine miles long, did not consider it necessary, and Prime Minister Jozsef Antall assured the nation that there was no imminent danger. All three leaders announced they would not do any business with the eight-member committee in Moscow and expressed hope that Gorbachev would be restored. By Tuesday, it was Yeltsin who was attracting their attention, and Havel spoke with him over the phone on Tuesday evening.

The mood in Hungary was less apprehensive than in the other countries. When the leader of the Socialist Workers Party, a minuscule splinter group from the former ruling Communists, welcomed the coup, adding that "the time of our party is still to come," he was regarded as a marginal voice. The regular Communist Parties adopted a statesmanlike position and spoke emphatically of the defense of democracy. "The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia is and will remain a national party," declared its chairman. This from a Party whose only allegiance has always been to Moscow.

More sinister was the voice of the separatist Slovak National Party. Most Slovak politicians pointed out that Czechoslovakia is better able to defend itself than an independent Slovakia, but the separatists' chief concern was that the situation would be exploited by federalist forces "for prolonging the inferior position of the Slovak nation." In Poland, the notorious presidential candidate Stanislaw Tyminski was noncommittal, explaining that "as for the possible human-rights infringements during the state of emergency, I think what the Soviet people want first of all is bread."

The leaders of all three countries quickly launched a diplomatic offensive, the aim of which was to press for a place under the Western security umbrella. Lech Walesa talked on the phone with George Bush, François Mitterrand, and Jacques Delors. Czechoslovak Foreign Minister Jiri Dienstbier turned his holiday in Florida into a working visit, meeting with James Baker and Dick Cheney in Washington. He requested American support for faster integration of the former satellites into Western Europe and even "formal guarantees" of security. (However, he failed to spell out any specific reason why the West should want to do so.)

A number of political parties in Poland and in Czechoslovakia expressed their support for the Russian democrats and used the opportunity to call for unity and an end to partisan bickering at home. But not the Civic Democratic Party, led by Czechoslovak Finance Minister Vaclav Klaus. He was optimistic during the crisis but did not pin his hopes on Yeltsin or any other individual. He used the opportunity to reiterate that *perestroika*-style "third way" economic reforms lead nowhere. Speaking of unity, he stressed that political differences "cannot be swept under the carpet."

The day when the good news from Russia began to come, Wednesday the 21st, was the anniversary of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. At a commemorative rally held in the center of Prague on that day, representatives of Klaus's party were notably missing among the speakers. This attitude was viewed unfavorably by journalists addicted to feasts of solidarity, but it sent a poignant message that, after more than forty years, the policies of this country are no longer decided in Moscow.

While the economic worries remain, the political landscape in the European East will be profoundly changed by this Russian revolution.

But the greatest impact will be on the domestic politics of the former satellites. Many people are in for some rethinking: for example, company managers who hoped that the centralized Soviet market would be restored, because it is the only environment they can handle; and some cautious politicians whose calls in the past for a more "constructive" relationship with the unreconstructed Soviet Union look different in the new light. In short, Central Europeans are no longer

Mr. Weiss is a freelance writer based in Prague.

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pawns in the games of totalitarian regimes.

Thus it should give a boost to real political leaders. Democratic Union, the party of the former Polish Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki, expressed the hope that the situation would not be exploited for renewed attacks on the Left. But at the Prague rally, calls for removing former Communists from power drew bigger applause than any memories of August 1968.

The revolution in Eastern Europe is speeding up. Poland labored for ten years before its "big compromise" was attained. Here in Prague, Communists lost power in just one week. During three days in Russia, the Communist Party was banned. This ban is the one reason Central Europeans may envy their Eastern neighbors. □

Getting It Wrong about Gorby

BRIAN CROZIER

LONDON

THE HUMBLING of Mikhail Gorbachev by Boris Yeltsin in the second Russian Revolution took Western leaders by surprise. For years the orthodox wisdom was that Gorby was the great leader and reformer, Yeltsin a bumbling maverick to be snubbed when he tried to catch the West's attention. And now . . .

Of all Western leaders, the one who most clearly made an ass of himself was François Mitterrand. Known as *le Florentin* because of his Machiavellian pragmatism, the French president told his television viewers on Monday, August 19, that he had been in touch with Gennady Yanayev, initiator of the coup, whom he described as "the new leader," implying that France could do business with him. For this instant switch in loyalties, Mitterrand was roundly attacked in the press and parliament; the Gaullist leader in the Senate, Charles Pasqua, talked of the "spirit of Munich blowing on Paris." Two days later, Mitterrand was back on the little screen, defensively acknowledging the role of Yeltsin. Came Thursday, and the Elysée Palace flourished a message from Gorbachev thanking Mitterrand for convening a European summit.

Helmut Kohl didn't do much better. His first reaction was to assure the putschists that Germany would stick to its treaties. Until then, Kohl's line had been that he was Gorbachev's best friend in the West. As for Yeltsin, he didn't qualify for a favorable mention. By Friday, Kohl and his Foreign Minister, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, were heaping praise upon Boris Yeltsin.

John Major did slightly better. On the Monday, he condemned the coup. While recognizing Gorbachev's contribution "over recent years," he stopped short of calling for his reinstatement. His predecessor, Margaret Thatcher, called on the Soviet people to take to the streets to support Yeltsin and bring Gorbachev back. A couple of days later Major was praising Yeltsin.

Mr. Neil Kinnock, leader of Britain's opposition Labor Party, scarcely qualifies as a Western leader, but he could be one next year should that inconvenient recession refuse to recede. Mr. Kinnock described Gorbachev's resignation as a leader of the Soviet Communist Party this way: "I believe it will prove another act of greatness from a man who has made so many historic changes possible."

An "act of greatness"? When the Soviet president came back in the small hours from his rudely interrupted vacation, his first concern, apart from denouncing the leaders of the abortive coup, was to reaffirm his loyalty to the Party. It was Yeltsin, two days later, who forced him to read the minutes of a Soviet cabinet meeting which showed that virtually the whole of Gorbachev's own appointed government had either supported the coup or failed to oppose it. And when Yeltsin proposed to halt the work of the Russian Communist Party, Gorbachev warned the deputies against "any kind of anti-Communist hysteria." Two days after that came Gorby's "act of greatness," under evident duress.

The goings-on in the Soviet embassy in London are not irrelevant. Ambassador Leonid Zamyatin, though officially a diplomat, is a typical *apparatchik* who had run the International Information (read "Disinformation") Department of the Party's Central Committee before coming to Britain. It was clear to Zamyatin's staff that he was very pleased with the coup, but he was careful not to burn his boats. (His Dublin colleague, German Gventsadze, actually removed Gorbachev's portrait within hours; he had it rehung on the Wednesday.) Summoned by British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd on the Monday, the ambassador put on his best ambiguous smile, praised Gorbachev, expressed confidence that the coup would succeed, but refrained from giving Yanayev and fellow plotters his explicit support. In a session with John Major, he confirmed that President Gorbachev was indeed "very ill." On Wednesday, Zamyatin saw Hurd again to confirm that Gorbachev was back. He added Gorbachev's thanks for Britain's help. The smile had gone, however. On Friday, the news came that Gorbachev's Foreign Minister, Aleksandr Bessmertnykh, had been fired. Embassy staffers started tearing up their Party cards and calling for a new ambassador. As for Zamyatin, he locked himself in his room.

For the European end of NATO, the coup was initially traumatic. The coup leaders had made reassuring noises about honoring existing defense treaties and about continuing the withdrawal of Soviet forces from former East Germany and Poland, but NATO's Secretary General, Manfred Woerner, declared that the allies were "deeply concerned."

There was considerable, though muted, alarm at the knowledge that the likes of Gennady Yanayev and Dmitri Yazov held the keys to the Soviet Union's superpower nuclear force.

When Yeltsin prevailed, a vast sigh of relief was heaved, soon replaced by anxious frowns as one Republic after another claimed independence. What on the Soviet earth is going to happen to those nukes scattered around it? Nobody knows, but everybody is fretting about it.

Gorbachev hoped that if he could hang on in the USSR, his policies might persuade the West to pay for keeping his own party in the saddle. He almost got away with it at the London summits. Kohl was ready with billions in aid, while three hundred thousand Soviet troops stayed on in

Mr. Crozier, an NR *Contributing Editor, is author of* The Gorbachev Phenomenon.

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eastern Germany. Mitterrand, too, was ready to pay up. Bush and Major, wisely, were more reticent, as was Toshiki Kaifu of Japan.

The problem now, for the West, is to re-examine the treaties concluded with Gorbachev, not only in the arms field but in support of his Leninist concept of a "common European home" [see "An Attack of Pactitis," Aug. 12]. Under Gorbachev, arms expenditure went on undiminished, and plans for a market economy went unimplemented. Under Yeltsin, there is a real chance of progress toward democracy and an unthreatening future. But our leaders will have to lose their addiction to Gorby. □

The Old Guard

DONALD KIRK

SAIGON

THE DATELINE is not obsolete. The abbreviation SGN still denotes Tansonnhut Airport on baggage labels, even those used by Vietnam Airlines with its fleet of decrepit Tupolevs and Antonovs. "Saigon" is still the proper name for the sprawling downtown of the much larger metropolitan district now dubbed "Ho Chi Minh City."

If the name of the old capital is dying hard, one cannot say the same for the mystique of Ho Chi Minh. There never was much of a Ho mystique here in the first place. Most of the city's four million people, those who could not get away at American expense before the fall, those who have not made it out since then as boat people or legally under the Orderly Departure Program, still yearn to live somewhere else—somewhere, preferably, an ocean or continent or two removed from the inheritors of the legacy of Uncle Ho.

It is the realization that most people here view them with cynicism and bitterness, if not the fanatic hatred of those who suffered through "re-education," that most alarms the leaders in Hanoi. And it was clearly with a certain disbelieving relief that they listened to the news of Mikhail Gorbachev's ouster. Nguyen Xuan Oanh, "Jack Owen" in his Harvard days in the early 1950s, summarized the regime's feelings toward the Gorbachev era: "It could not be worse."

The setting for the remark was the bar of the Floating Hotel, a newly opened luxury lodging right on the Saigon River. The occasion: a reception for a German company opening up an office here. Oanh, who was prime minister of the old Saigon regime for a few months in the mid 1960s, wears his Harvard tie while dispensing advice to would-be foreign investors. He doubles as a key advisor to leaders in Hanoi on "free enterprise" and a "market economy"—the very terms that come to mind in discussions of *glasnost* and *perestroika*. In response to dissent, Hanoi has approved sweeping reforms that may bring about capitalism on a scale not seen here since French rule.

There is a difference, though, between the Vietnamese and Soviet experience. Vietnam wanted *perestroika*, or restructuring, without much *glasnost*, or openness. The specter of Vietnam's benefactor turning into "a free country" and then fragmenting has been a frightening one. Economic breakdown in the Soviet Union had been disillusioning enough; when the Kremlin this year stopped accepting near-worthless ruble payments for arms, oil, and other vital commodities, demanding "hard-currency" dollars, Vietnamese leaders began turning elsewhere with real desperation.

Both of Vietnam's longtime foes, the U.S. and China, may benefit from Hanoi's realization of the urgent need to patch up differences and look for new trade and aid. It was to ingratiate itself with the U.S. that Hanoi welcomed the opening in June of an office for Americans tracking down missing GIs. And it was to reopen the vast Chinese market that Vietnam sent an emissary to Peking to talk about ending the war in Cambodia.

A reshuffling in Hanoi, in the weeks before the stunning sequence of coup, counter-coup, and dissolution of the Soviet Communist Party, points up the differences. The regime did not change colors more than a shade—Do Muoi, elevated to general secretary of Vietnam's Communist Party in June, is an old conservative who may be tougher than his predecessor, Nguyen Van Linh. And Vo Van Kiet, the southerner named prime minister in place of Do Muoi, has a long record of molding economic change while going along with tough political policies.

Thus Hanoi was ready when the first reports came in from Moscow over TASS. The initial news was carefully squeezed onto page four of the papers—worth reporting but less than momentous. The fact that it appeared quickly was enough to show where Hanoi's leaders stood; they would have been delighted if "hard-liners" had replaced Gorbachev, if the CPSU could again set a stirring example of the power of the Party—and, above all, if their Soviet "friends" would again pour in the arms and oil payable in rubles, not dollars. In such straight reporting, without commentary, however, was a hint of caution: it might be too good to be true.

In the little restaurants and cafés, the subsequent unraveling of the Soviet structure was a topic of small talk reminiscent of the constant gossip about "coups" in Saigon during the war. "It will make no difference to us," said the guide I was compelled to hire by the rules dictating foreign travel here. "Nothing will change. It has nothing to do with us." Press reports on the downfall of the coup-makers were markedly briefer than the ones on the coup. My guide, like most educated Saigonese, preferred to get his news from the BBC.

"The government is more corrupt than before," observed an aging intellectual, chatting over lunch in a living room decorated with old lacquer figures and photographs of ancestors. "I hoped it would be better, but it was worse. Everywhere you go you have to pay. Anything you want to do. You have to pay the clerk, the guard, the chief, and the chief chief. And if you don't, then nothing's done."

The more the people take the Soviet example seriously, the more the leaders have to fear. "There wouldn't be much change here," was Oanh's comfortable view. "If anything it might be just the other way around—knowing that Russia has failed." Thus Vietnam's leaders go on, viewing reports from Moscow as reason to cling to old, outmoded ideals and ideology. □

Mr. Kirk is a veteran foreign correspondent.

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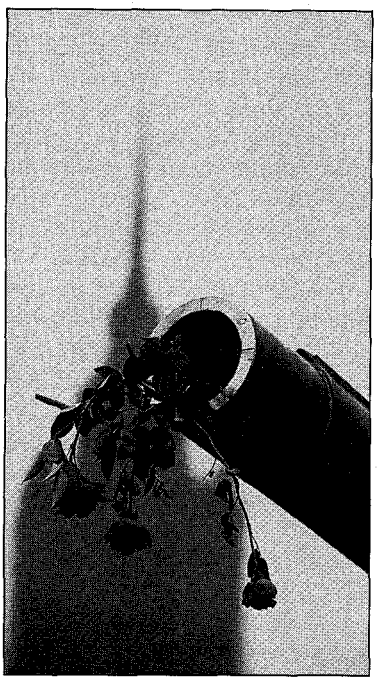

The August Revolution

REFLECTIONS ON THE REVOLUTION

For almost eighty years, the Communist Party governed the Soviet Union. Only a month ago its power remained essentially intact. Why did it collapse in three days?

ROBERT CONQUEST

EDGAR ALLAN POE, in his horrible story "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar," has as his theme a man who is put under hypnosis just as he is dying. When he is dead, though looking haggard and livid, he still stays in contact with the doctors conducting the experiment. After some weeks they decide to wake him, but the moment he comes out of the trance he turns into a putrescent corpse. The Soviet Communist regime, too, was lacking all but a semblance of life, held together not by any vital principle but only, in effect, by a hypnotic spell. Its active beliefs and ideology had become mere reflex habits. Its economy consisted of an outward shell, with all the reality eaten away inside. Long overdue for death, it survived only by artificial and unnatural means. (Waldemar, it may be noted, is a variant of Vladimir . . .)

What was the nature of the forces which prevented its early disintegration? Civic society in the Russian Empire was already weak, and in 1917 it was totally destroyed. The extent to which Leninism–Stalinism penetrated is to be seen in dozens of remarks by now prominent democrats, such as "All my life I had Stalin in me" and "The servile terror of Stalin lives in the bones and veins of people who never knew him." Even a century ago, Anton Chekhov laid down Russia's task as to "squeeze out the slave drop by drop." The effort that has had to be made over the past five or six years was to squeeze out not merely the barbaric past, but also the far more deadly transfusion of the newer Marxist poisons. One advantage this generation had: the Communist experience was so frightful, and in so many ways, that once the anaesthetic began to wear off, the realities filled the Russians and their fellow subjects with ever-increasing horror and revulsion. Almost every family had contributed one or more victims to the cycles of terror which had marked the period. All but a few Russians had imbibed accounts of their history which were now exposed as disgusting lies and libels. And when the carapace cracked, there came the consciousness that the economic and social system for which all these sacrifices had been made was a disaster and a fraud.

So Many Heroes

SOME strange reactions to this massive revulsion were to be found in the West. One or two commentators here carped to the effect that only a few hundred thousand people turned out in Moscow and St. Petersburg: a point well answered by a middle-aged citizen of the former who told the Western press that though fully in sympathy with the Yeltsinites, he and his family had indeed sat out the crisis. Those who had gone into the streets, he added, were heroes, as he was not; and it was extraordinary that Moscow had so many heroes. Fair enough.

Then, Boris Yeltsin emerged as the hero of heroes. But acceptance of this also encountered a certain amount of resistance over here. He was a little crude. He was a "populist." Perhaps he was interested in power. All of which may remind us of the reaction of refined souls in Washington to the arrival of Andrew Jackson. And such deplorable vulgarians come to mind as Ernest Bevin and Harry Truman. "Slob" and "boozer" were among other characterizations of Yeltsin (though these may not seem appropriate in the mouths supporters of a senator or so one might mention).

Now Yeltsin may not be suited to a part in *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*. Indeed, and more importantly, he may fail in some future crisis. But to rate him just on his social graces is shallow to the point of flippancy. Stalin made an excellent social impression on Roosevelt, which warped the latter's judgment and led to actions as stupid as they were dangerous. We cannot afford to have these adolescent crushes and hostilities. Yeltsin may or may not turn out to be the man of the future. We need not become uncritical about him, as so many have been about Gorbachev. But for the present he is the best we have—and also the first ever elected leader of Russia.

Mr. Conquest is the distinguished Sovietologist and author of a forthcoming biography of Stalin.

PHOTOGRAPH: SYGMA

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This soggy "personal relations" stuff was also to be noted (though in the other direction) in, for example, remarks by some of our military and other figures on how sad it was about arms negotiator Marshal Akhromeyev, what a great fellow he had been, how well they'd got on together. He seemed "nice" enough when I met him. But his career had been devoted to destroying us! Such negotiations should not lead us to behave like those neighbors of killer-rapists who tell the newspapers what regular guys they were . . .

Reserved Rejoicing

THE EMERGENCE of civil society, the squeezing out of the slave mentality, are matters for unreserved rejoicing. They imply a better future. But they do not guarantee it. The economy is in such a desperate state, the necessary measures so harsh, that the struggles and poverty lying ahead might lead to a collapse of civil patience, a crisis of morale, before positive results emerge. It is in this context that we should view one of the commonest reports from Russia—of citizens who fear that some later attempt to restore the old order may yet be made.

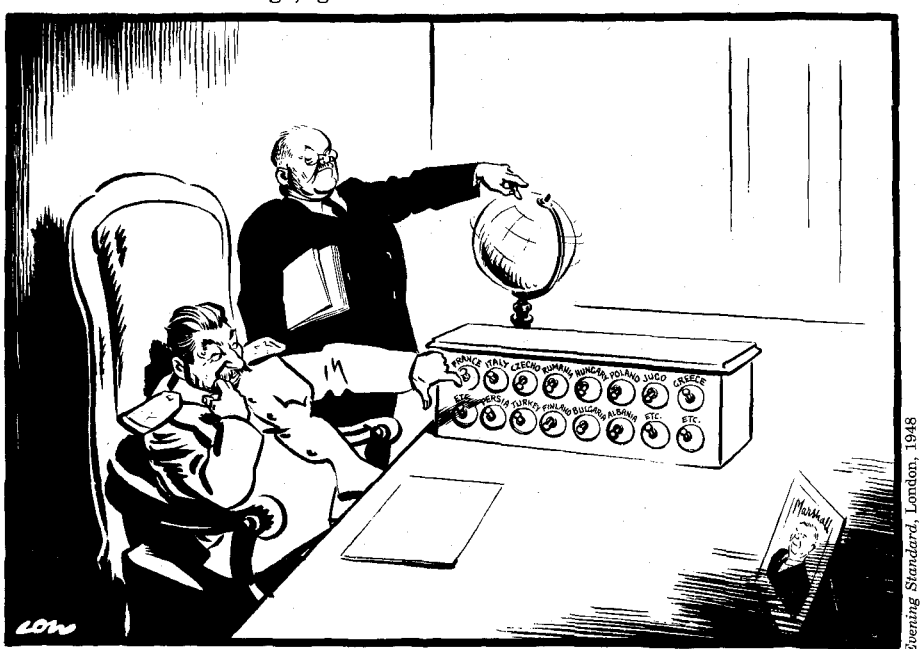
In that connection, though not only in that connection, we need to look at pressure from certain quarters to cut off Radio Liberty. In the crisis, it played an irreplaceable role—even being referred to by Gorbachev as one of his links to reality. The BBC and VOA were also very useful. But what Radio Liberty amounted to, as it has done over its whole existence, was and is a voice for the Russian and other Soviet peoples when they are deprived of one of their own. Its premature demise would have been an encouragement to Communist reaction, and if it ever takes place will be an encouragement to any successors.

Radio Liberty was, of course, a target of American "liberals" who felt it to be an instrument of the cold war. But what was the cold war? From the start, as is now perfectly clear, it was a contest between, on the one hand, Stalin and his successors, with their apparatus of corrupt fanatics, and, on the other, ourselves and the Soviet people. This is, indeed, accepted as a truism in Moscow. It was a little peculiar, then, to read in President Bush's Kiev speech a month ago, "In the past, our nations engaged in duels of eloquent bluff and bravado, and now the fireworks of superpower confrontation are giving way to the quieter and far more hopeful arts of cooperation." Leaving aside what "nation" he imagined himself to be addressing in the Ukrainian capital, we see that he, or his speechwriter, was sneering at the policies of Ronald Reagan and the other Western leaders which, as every Muscovite will tell you, held the line until the despotism collapsed, and which made that collapse possible. But not only of Reagan—of Scoop Jackson too. And hurrah, meanwhile, for Congressman Solarz.

Indeed, it is quite extraordinary that the Democrats now feel themselves at a disadvantage, given the Administration's handling of the Soviet crisis—from the first favorable remarks about the gangster front-man Yanayev to the delay in recognizing Baltic independence. Both of these mistakes might have done harm: the first, obviously, by encouraging the plotters at a critical moment; the second by encouraging Gorbachev in his ploy of demanding "legal processes" over the Baltic issue (rather like a kidnapper telling a victim who is making his escape that this can only be done on a court order). The impression given is of yet more Administration nostalgia for the supposed "stability" of the system centralized on Moscow, as against the principle of nationality.

One of the constituencies on which the plotters relied was clearly the extreme Russian nationalist-imperialists, including the anti-Semitic element. These had, over the past years, done very badly in elections. But they were vocal, and thought by democrats, both here and there, to be dangerous. In the event Russianism was almost totally pre-empted by Yeltsin, on a program of complete non-chauvinism —including, of course, the immediate recognition of Baltic independence. This was crucial. And in the past week, as we have seen, the emphasis of the revolution has shifted from the destruction of despotism to the ending of empire.

In his Kiev speech Bush rightly warned against "a suicidal nationalism based upon ethnic hatred." And in some areas of the former USSR these are showing themselves—especially the Caucasus. But the faintest suggestion that this could and should be coped with by Moscow rule is both superficial and dangerous. Such arrangements did not solve the problem over the centuries of czarist and Soviet dominion. Nor can that empire, even in a much milder version, be restored—at least, not without a slaughter quite as bad as the slaughters possibly arising from interethnic troubles. Which is not to say that Russian troops might not help in a crisis, perhaps as part of a UN force. We should remember that the French army, almost unanimously execrated in its Napoleonic invasion of Spain, was welcomed back with great warmth when it returned under the Bourbons only a



Evening Standard, London, 1948

"WHO'S NEXT TO BE LIBERATED FROM FREEDOM, COMRADE?"

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decade later. But such would be in exceptional cases. In the main, the relationships between the Republics need no nannying.

It is true, as is sometimes argued in favor of Moscocentrism, that their economies are closely interlinked across the old USSR. An engine will be made in Moldova, its spark plugs in Kazakhstan. Therefore, we are told, there must be a central co-ordinating agency. One of my recent books was published in London and printed in India, without either help or hindrance from the British or Indian government, or the United Nations or even UNESCO. It will take a time before such arrangements become possible in the ex-Union (one Ukrainian factory had to close down for two weeks after breaking off with the Ministry in Moscow). But after an interim, centralization need not be more than minimal. Nor need it imply any *political* centralization whatever.

The attachment of part of our own foreign-policy establishment to the idea of the stability supposedly found in the old status quo, a reluctance to face the possibly unpredictable yet all the same unavoidable future, is in accordance with my warning, in *NR*'s last issue, against a historical "political science." The future, like the past, is not amenable to schematic treatment. When our political leadership broadens its perspectives (and our media give less time to lunatic assessments), we shall be in a better position to understand and help the democratic revolution which faces such desperate problems. □

GETTING IT WRONG?

The coup taught Western Sovietologists a valuable lesson: the Soviet Union was not a Western democracy.

CHARLES FAIRBANKS

TANKS in the streets, the general secretary held prisoner by his trusted aides, elite units of the KGB voting on whom to obey: if we had heard about any of this before, it was from paperback thrillers, not (with a few exceptions), from Soviet specialists. The public relied on us during the years of *perestroika* to penetrate into a remote world, with odd jargon and unfamiliar structures, and prepare the public for unexpected events. But what the public heard (for example, from the sophisticated and enormously learned Seweryn Bialer, two years ago) was that "There is no danger of an anti-Party group, a coalition of old-guard leaders, or Stalinists forming in the Politburo." Or again: "The unquestionable existence of opposition to Gorbachev does not, however, constitute a real present danger to his leading position. The struggle at the top concerns the extent of Gorbachev's power. It is also extremely unlikely that . . . Gorbachev [could face] his own 'anti-Party' group with a majority in the Politburo, as Khrushchev did in June 1957."

These judgments about coups were founded on a broader Sovietological consensus that, as Gail Lapidus put it, ". . . although the Soviet system confronts a set of major problems . . . the danger of destabilization is extremely remote." Professor Stephen Cohen of Princeton expressed this consensus in saying that, "Put simply, the Soviet Union has become, both 'downstairs' in society and 'upstairs' in the political system, one of the most conservative countries in the world." Or as Jerome Gilison argued, "contemporary Soviet society is built on a solid foundation of regime support."

How did our Sovietology take this wrong turn? First, all of us were confused by the years during which the old *nomenklatura* had every motive to make a coup but didn't. In retrospect, we may not have taken seriously enough the Leninist doctrine of democratic centralism: that is, that lower Party bodies have to obey the Politburo, and ultimately the General Secretary, because the Party must be united against its enemies. Gorbachev clearly exploited democratic centralism to force the Party apparatus to accept his drastic changes. But democratic centralism also implies that if a consensus ever forms within the upper echelons of the Party that the General Secretary no longer represents it, that he is himself the enemy, the Party must unite against him. This seems to have happened to Khrushchev in 1964 and to Gorbachev in 1991. If so, our error was to be too practical, too "realistic," by discounting ideas and the distinctive subculture of Bolshevism.

Second, Sovietology did not pay enough attention to the disintegration of the state (that is, of higher officials' authority and lower officials' loyalty) during the years of *perestroika*. The coup happened because the KGB and military leaders no longer obeyed their legal commander-in-chief, Gorbachev; it fell apart because they, in turn, were not obeyed by many lower officers. This disintegration of the very structure of the state is outside our experience of the world, although we could have grasped it from history. It was the theme of conservative historians such as David Hume and Hippolyte Taine, but not of modern political science. Modern political science is affected by the liberal politics of most of its practictioners. For modern liberalism, far-reaching protest and change can be let loose without ever threatening the legitimacy of the existing state or the habits of obedience to law and respect for the public good. Liberal judicial activism, for example, continually changes the meaning of the Constitution without worrying that this will damage respect for the Constitution. American liberals were thus optimistic about the prospects of Gorbachev's kindred project, "a revolution within the Revolution." They assumed that you can bend law and custom indefinitely without breaking it. Gorbachev found out otherwise.

Third, we somehow managed to overlook the obvious likelihood that the advocates of democracy and the

Mr. Fairbanks, a research professor of international relations at the Nitze School of International Studies, was a Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in the Reagan Administration. The footnotes to this article, cut for lack of space, are available from NR.

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market would want to repudiate the old system, Communism or "socialism," and that the ruling class, which owed all its privileges and its honored station in society to Communism, would try to save it. By 1991 the means available were the KGB, the MVD, and the army. Instead, the bulk of the foreign-policy elite believed (with the Bush Administration) that a defiantly distinctive system of government could quietly but quickly change into the precise opposite system that it had derided every day for seventy years. The conventional wisdom further assumed that the ruler of the first system, the authoritative source of its ideology, could manage the transition to the new order while remaining its leader: as though Louis XVI had survived the collapse of the monarchy, the aristocracy, and the Church to go on as the foremost Jacobin leader. To state this assumption is to expose its extreme implausibility. The alternative assumptiion—that different social-political systems and their advocates would clash violently—seems, in contrast, to be simple common sense.

Mass Delusion

THROUGHOUT the years of *perestroika* we seem to have been in the grip of some sort of mass delusion that paralyzed common sense: specifically, the common-sense distinction between different political systems or regimes. All ordinary political experience begins with the distinction between the experience of ruling ourselves (once called republican government) and that of being ruled by others. On this basis there is a common-sense distinction between democracy, oligarchy, and one-man rule, whether legitimate (monarchy) or illegitimate (dictatorship). Through the first 150 or so years of American history, self-rule or "liberty" was the goal of politics, the loss of liberty the great fear. But now all these distinctions have been blurred. We do not think of liberty as something that can be lost, and we have the belief (fortified by some cases such as the evolution of Spain after Franco) that dictatorship and democracy mingle and evolve into each other.

The excuse for this great transformation has been social science. As a fellow graduate student in comparative politics once impatiently explained to me, if we say an apple and an orange are different, we are not "comparing" them; we compare them only by saying that each is a fruit. All political differences come to be seen as quantitative differences. As Jerry Hough has expressed it, ". . . there is not . . . there cannot be—a society in which all power is concentrated in a few hands and in which the broad population has none." Hough was writing about "the Stalin case." The specific social-science concept that has been used to legitimize many dictatorships (Communist and non-Communist) is "political participation." Citizen "participation" in politics, for our social science, occurs not only through free elections but through interest groups, the media, bureaucracy (higher officials "represent" lower officials), or even attendance at rallies organized by the Communist Party. By this standard, as Hough wrote in 1977, "the Soviet system [is] a very participatory one."

If social science was the excuse for blurring the distinctions among regimes, the energy came from politics. Beginning in the Sixties, under the influence of Vietnam, American and British Sovietology underwent a transformation whose goals are nakedly obvious in this remark by Susan Gross Solomon:

> The building of real conceptual bridges between comparative politics and Soviet studies would have accomplished two objectives. First, it would have demonstrated more forcefully than any argument that the Soviet Union was not an outsider in the family of nations, a pariah. And, in destigmatizing the Soviet system, it would have moved specialists on Soviet politics more squarely into the mainstream of the discipline of political science.

The flight from the cold war and the totalitarian model sparked a hunt for the Soviet analogies of Western democratic institutions and practices. To take some examples almost at random, two careful British Sovietologists (Ronald J. Hill and Peter Frank) conclude that "To reject, as the writers in the 1950s did, all single parties as not 'really' being parties is to follow the road to intellectual bankruptcy . . . the world has moved on, . . . and new types of political systems, with fresh forms of institutions, have come into being. It is the task of political science to accommodate these forms into an enriched theory. . ." Jerome Gilison maintains ". . . it can be said that the leadership of the British parties and the Soviet party strive for the same sort of democracy within the party." As Gilison says in conclusion, "one of the main themes of this book has been the underlying similarities of the British and Soviet systems of government."

This school of thought was fueled not only by politics, but by some real defects of the totalitarian model and by a generous instinct of tolerance. It made some real discoveries about the Soviet system. Nevertheless, taken as a total framework it was massively

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misleading, and it did not prepare us for the surprises since 1985.

Nowhere was our Sovietology's prudery about the distinctiveness of Soviet Communism greater than in approaching the role of coups d'état, of force, of the KGB, and of the army in Soviet politics. These modes of political struggle are utterly beyond the horizon of British or American politics; they seem to belong not to politics but to fantasy, to fiction. To show that the USSR was a normal state, it was essential to exclude the KGB and MVD from politics.

This our Sovietology had done, until Mikhail Gorbachev was held prisoner by the KGB last month. In 1986 Bialer pronounced it "one of the most important characteristics of the present Soviet system that the secret police [has been] largely eliminated from the political process within the elite." Peter Hauslohner, brought from Yale into the Bush Administration as the State Department's Soviet specialist, attributes "the KGB's apparent lack of interest in domestic politics to its rising professionalism. . . . As for the military, there is, again, more evidence of strong political control than of its weakness or absence." Soviet history was rewritten to blur at least four coups d'état (non-constitutional selections of leaders involving access to force) since Stalin's death (March 1953, June 1953, June 1957, October 1964). We now have an account from the KGB Chairman himself, V. E. Semichastny, of the 1964 conspiracy against Khrushchev: "When we came to Kosygin a week beforehand, his first question was 'How is the KGB disposed?' When we told him that we were part of this, he said, 'I agree.'" Subsequently, the KGB mounted a massive campaign of blackmail and, perhaps, intimidation to secure the position of General Secretary for its chairman, Yuri Andropov, and then for his chosen heir, Mikhail Gorbachev. We have the testimony of Yegor Ligachev that Gorbachev could not have become General Secretary without the support of Chebrikov, chairman of the KGB. Indeed, the KGB was so dangerous to Gorbachev precisely because, relying on it against his rivals, he left it as the only major institution whose leadership he never purged. We know the sequel. Through the years when the role of the political police was growing toward its recent climax, our Sovietology was trying to assimilate its role in leadership politics to that of Western police agencies; in 1985 Hough compared it to the FBI.

Something Fishy

SO OFTEN our Sovietology has set out to discover Soviet reality, and come back having discovered once again Western politics. It gives one a discouraging sense of the futility of the scientific quest in our times. We roamed the universe with our technology and our powerful methodologies and saw only ourselves. When we see another nation feverishly piling up arms, it turns out to be because we were doing it ("the arms race"); if the Sandinistas hate us, or if Pol Pot is exterminating his own people (in Shawcross's *Sideshow*), it is only because we were mean to them. Even in my childhood, it was different. My parents and their coevals were gripped, half in horror and half in fascination, by the imminent arrival of the Unknown. Your neighbors act just a little strange; it turns out their bodies have been occupied by aliens and the town you grew up in is now the center from which they are at this moment taking over the earth. At the beach you have just a moment's surmise—"Do you smell something fishy?"—before it's here: the Creature from the Black Lagoon! In the serious world of scholarship, the Fifties experts who so obsessively studied Nazism and Communism were gripped by the hunch that they would uncover a secret, something strange and fascinating. For some reason, what we now want to discover is the opposite. We want to be bored. Perhaps future civilizations will regard this as the particular feeling that distinguished our civilization from all the others. Some civilizations were serenely cradled in their own traditional ways; others restlessly explored the unknown in their yearning for excitement. Ours is probably the first that made boredom the object of craving. □

AFTER COMMUNISM

Before the coup, Communist hard-liners blocked the way. Now, anything is possible.

LEON ARON

THE historic significance of the August 19 coup is in ending the transitional, Gorbachev phase of the Soviet transformation, a phase of reformed and reforming Communism, and in ushering a new historic period, that of an anti-Communist democratic revolution.

By August 19, this transitional stage had already grown inordinately, unnaturally long. In Poland, the first post-Communist nation, the transition took slightly more than a year. In Albania, the most recent self-liberated country, it took nine months. In between, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, and the German Democratic Republic covered the same political ground in just a few months. In the Soviet Union—meaning, of course, Moscow—Gorbachev's transitional regime of a benign one-party dictatorship with a human face, a sort of Moscow Spring, had lasted for six years and four months!

It ended with a giant shift of the entire Soviet political spectrum from right to left in terms of Soviet political discourse, or from left to right in the lexicon of the rest of the world. The result will be a massive and, at long last, truly revolutionary redistribution of power: from the center to the Republics and from the extra-legal Party–government structures to the newly empowered self-governing bodies.

This shift is now possible because

Mr. Aron is Salvatori Senior Policy Analyst in Soviet Studies at the Heritage Foundation. He is at work on a biography of Boris Yeltsin.

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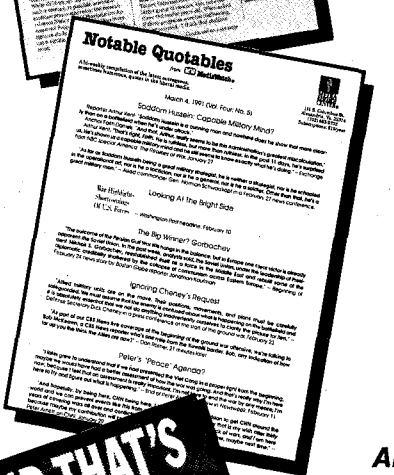

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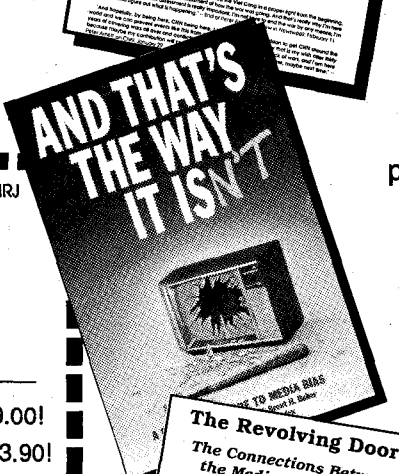

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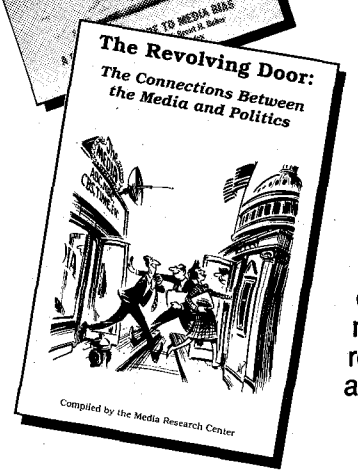

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the coup has obliterated a key fixture of the Soviet political cosmos. For the last six years, Soviet politics have been transacted on the margin of the giant black hole called the "Communist Right." As with its counterpart in astronomy, this political black hole was invisible but assumed to have enormous mass. As Gorbachev navigated his space ship *Perestroika* in the dark sky of Soviet politics, he justified his zigzagging and backtracking course by the fear of trespassing the black hole and crushing the whole enterprise. First inside the country but, of late, largely in the West this explanation has been sufficient to justify the increasingly erratic course of Captain Gorbachev.

Now the black hole has been removed from the Soviet sky. Or not removed but revealed to be—and, perhaps, to have been all along—a rather paltry, ordinary star of less than average gravitational force.

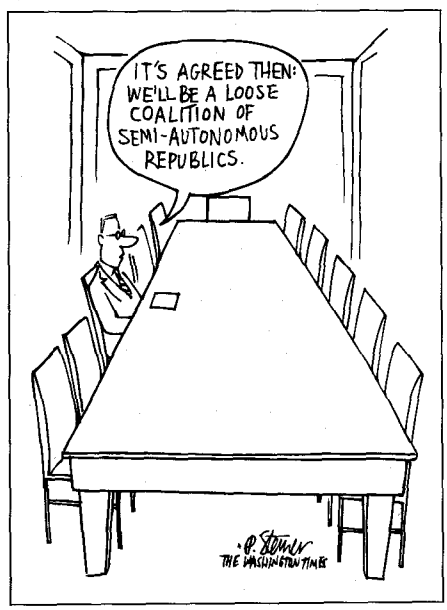
Redrawing the Charts

MOST immediately, the consequences of this reconfiguration of the Soviet political firmament will be felt in the fate of the Union. As in February 1917, a democratic revolution necessarily causes the breakup of the domestic empire. While for tens of millions of former Soviet subjects this deliverance is by far the most joyful event of their lives, one should beware of the Western liberal intelligentsia, especially its mass-media and academic branches, who are likely to present their fellow citizens and decision-makers with a decidedly less optimistic portrait of a disintegrating USSR. (This is hardly surprising, since the Soviet breakup is fueled by nationalism, capitalism, and anti-Communism—the three political and economic phenomena Western liberal intellectuals detest the most.)

At the moment, the horror scenarios have four major variations, often mixed for a stronger effect.

Violence. The Serbo-Croatian war in Yugoslavia is presented as a preview of Soviet developments. But the example is spurious for two reasons. First, the sort of intense, centuries-old hatred that obtains between the Serbs and Croats exists in the former Soviet Union only between two peoples, the Armenians and Azerbaijanis. While a protracted conflict there seems inevitable, it is likely to be sluggish, low tech, on again, off again, involving a total of no more than ten million people—a far cry from a "bloodbath" that, we are told, is about to engulf the country of 270 million.

Second, democracies very rarely fight. The key to the Serbian intransigence is hard-line Communists still in power. Of the 15 Republics of the Soviet Union, seven have decidedly anti-Communist, democratically elected governments (Armenia, Estonia, Georgia, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, and Russia) and two have reformed Communists in power (Kazakhstan, Ukraine). Thus the danger of Communists attempting to extend their political life by cloaking themselves in nationalist banners and precipitating violence exists only in Azerbaijan, Byelorussia, Kirgizia, Tadzhikistan, Turkmenia, and Uzbekistan. While bloody conflicts have erupted in Central Asia—particularly, in the last three years, between the Kirgiz and the Uzbeks—and will undoubtedly be repeated, they are too localized and sporadic to qualify as a "bloodbath."



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Finally, we might note that, in February 1917, in a situation remarkably similar to the one obtaining today, the empire fell apart with remarkably little bloodshed. The blood was spilled later when the Bolsheviks began putting the empire back together.

The Nuclear Menace. First, even if the newly emergent states wanted to keep nuclear weapons deployed on their territory, they would not know what to do with them: their arming, targeting, and launching was never in the purview of local commanders. More importantly, the three nations which, in addition to Russia, have nuclear weapons on their territory (Kazakhstan, Byelorussia, and Ukraine) all have declared their desire to get rid of any and all nuclear material on their territory. Ukraine declared itself a nuclear-free zone as part of its Declaration of Sovereignty.

Economic Non-Viability. As the Estonians like to point out to Western visitors, in 1940, before they were forced into the Soviet Union, their standard of living was twice as high as that of neighboring Finland. Now it is a fourth as high. Finland, itself a former Russian province, is a good example of this unexpected "viability": devoid of oil, natural gas, and coal, and short on all other raw materials with the exception of timber, this former Russian province has become a solid, middle-range European economy.

What is true of the three Baltic Republics is *a fortiori* true of such immensely rich countries as Russia, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan, and of such entrepreneurially minded peoples as the Georgians, Moldovans, and Armenians, all blessed with wonderfully benign climates and, in the Armenian case, with a wealthy and fervently patriotic expatriate community in the West.

The only region in the former Soviet Union that is in for truly hard economic times is Central Asia, plagued with virtually every classic attribute of Third World impoverishment: a miserable standard of living, a third to a fifth that of the Soviet Union as a whole; a monocultural economy (cotton); a disastrous environmental situation; unemployment; and an astronomical birthrate. Even here, however, the withdrawal of Moscow's subsidies, which will be very painful in the short run, will eventually be more than made up for by the rehabilitation of the cotton fields and their return to food production.

Yet even if the newly created states did not prove "economically viable," what would this matter? Hard as it might be for the West to understand, there are moments in peoples' history when they are run not by the accountants' logic but by passions. The decades-long dream of regaining national dignity and statehood by getting as far away as possible from a bloody, primitive, corrupt, and economically collapsing colonial empire is not likely to

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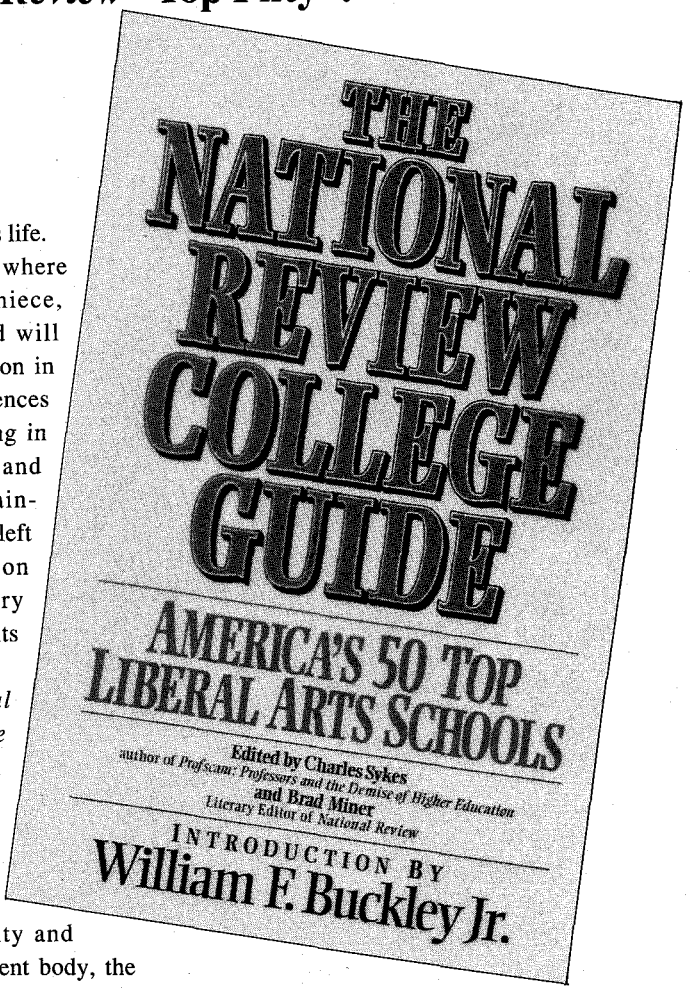
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be tarnished, much less diminished, by expectations of economic difficulties. History has yet to produce a single example of a newly independent state changing its mind and running back to its former colonial metropolis because of unanticipated hardships.

Russian Imperialism. The most significant, albeit little noticed, political process to have taken place in the Soviet Union in the last three years was the separation of Russian nationalism from Russian imperialism. The amazing nonchalance with which most Russians have been reacting to the growing independence of the Republics culminated, in January 1990, in mass protests against the call-up of ethnic Russian reservists to pacify Azerbaijan. Contrary to decades of punditry, the Russians were not willing to die for the empire. Once the draft was called off, the end of the empire was in sight.

The Test of Power

THE ONLY true test of a politician is the test of power. There is a slim but real possibility that, like Lenin before him, Yeltsin, who in opposition called for the right to secede, may, while in power, try to recreate the empire. Yet his entire record as the Chairman of the Russian Supreme Soviet and then President of Russia makes such a turn highly unlikely. It was Yeltsin who advocated the creation of a voluntary "horizontal" Union of equal states (as opposed to what he called Gorbachev's "vertical" structure, in which Moscow's power would continue to predominate) and has concluded economic and political treaties between Russia and all the other 14 Republics. It was Yeltsin who a year ago in Tatarstan enunciated the famous formula of granting all nationalities of the Soviet Union "as much autonomy as they can handle." And it was Yeltsin who on the morning of January 13, hours after Moscow-directed "black berets" shot their way into the television tower in Vilnius, flew to Tallinn to re-affirm his support for Baltic independence.

After its impact on the Union, the strongest impact of the coup is likely to be on the relationship between the two key *dramatis personae* of this magnificent spectacle. Since the Novo-Ogariovo agreement of April 23, but especially since Yeltsin's victory in the Russian presidential election on June 13, there was already in high Soviet politics a de-facto power-sharing, a kind of Gorbachev–Yeltsin cohabitation, with Gorbachev clearly the stronger partner. Now the entire dynamic of that relationship has shifted —with power lines going not from Gorbachev to Yeltsin but in the other direction.

The coup did more than shellshock Gorbachev. It divested him of a key prop. For Gorbachev's political brilliance was a high-wire act between the two poles. Now that one of the poles has collapsed so dramatically, can the act continue at all?

Will Gorbachev agree to a much weakened presidency? Or will he stubbornly attempt to regain the powers that he feels are rightfully his? If he persists in the latter, his days are numbered. If he accepts history's verdict, he may be rewarded with the largely ceremonial presidency of a much weakened Supreme Soviet, which is likely to become similar to the European Parliament.

For Yeltsin, the key gain of the coup was not increased popularity at home. That he had in spades already. It may not even be the dramatic increase in power. His key gain is the strides he has made in the only political arena where he was still behind Gorbachev: international recognition. Now, it seems, the West finally—and, in the case of the elite media and political establishments, reluctantly—is coming to realize what the 150 million Russians have known for at least four years: namely, that, alone among Soviet leaders, Yeltsin has enough of the people's trust to lead them through a very complicated transition to democracy and a market economy. □

DROWNING DEMOCRACY

Dollars in Moscow buy a lot of democrats—but not a lot of democracy.

VLADIMIR BUKOVSKY

EVEN before the "August coup" finally exposed the stupidity of Western policy toward the Soviet Union, that policy was demonstrably wrong. Western policy-makers did not falter in their support for Mikhail Gorbachev—even though their expressions of friendship were not translated into the massive infusion of money Gorbachev had originally hoped to obtain in London this summer, or into some kind of "grand bargain" such as the one cobbled together at Harvard's Kennedy School. Responsible heads of state, it is said, must seek stability in world affairs. They still cling to the old wisdom of all mediocrities, choosing the devil they know over the devil they do not know.

The great irony for these Western seekers of stability is that it was the Soviet government—and not the democratic opposition, which made them so nervous—that constituted the real threat to stability. Gorbachev was not strong enough to govern, but, thanks to the West, not weak enough to be removed peacefully.

Meanwhile, Soviet society was in danger of exploding violently, like Chernobyl, leaving behind a poisoned and poisonous landscape. The only condition that could stabilize the country, then as now, was the emergence of a strong, unified democratic movement that could oust the Communist Party peacefully, federate the nations of the empire, and see the people through the inevitable dislocation and pain of economic reform.

That Western politicians did not, if they ever will, understand the difficulty they were putting in the way of a decent outcome for the Soviet peoples goes without saying. But sad to

Mr. Bukovsky, exiled in 1976 after a long stint in Gulag for dissident activities, is the author of, among other works, To Build a Castle.

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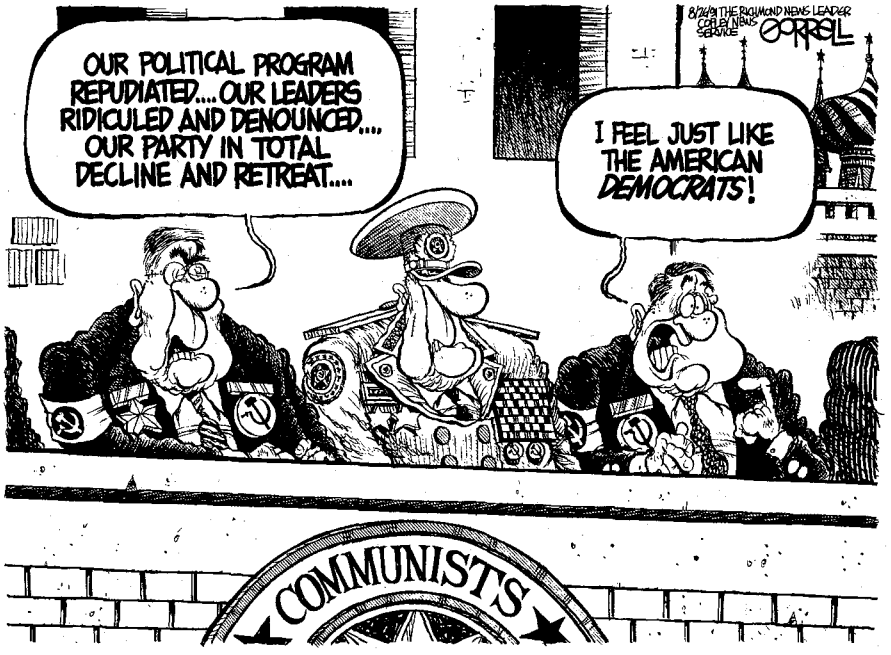
say, it is not only they who have made such obstacles. Even the foundations and organizations that do in theory understand the need to support the democratic movement and that have devoted both energy and resources to the effort, in practice often do more harm than good. For one thing, though their sympathies are in the right place, in their Western lack of feel for the ins and outs of Soviet reality they are frequently unable to tell a KGB agent, an opportunist, or even just a plain crook from a genuine democratic activist. Often, therefore, the kind of assistance offered by such sympathizers is simply abused—that is, used to fuel personal rivalries among self-serving and basically insignificant characters.

Indeed, because of the political climate in Russia, with various groups in competition and without consistent, policy-driven support from the West, Moscow before the coup had become the scene of a new quest for El Dorado. Each nugget of Western gold, no matter how small, was seen as a sign of fulfillment to come. And with such nuggets being scattered here and there—"pluralistically," as some who scatter them like to say—the unification of a strong democratic movement became an ever more difficult prospect. Meanwhile, of course, the KGB was busy promoting a "pluralism" of its own, not from ignorance but from the old effective policy of divide and conquer. Russians could, to be sure, resist the KGB—they were becoming more practiced at it every day, even before Feliks Dzerzhinsky was uprooted. But who among them could resist the blandishments of Western friends, their mentors and guides?

Whose Reform?

IN A WAY, the best example of this problem is the National Endowment for Democracy. (Perhaps it is that I myself feel I have the greatest stake in the NED, for many hours, days, weeks of my life have been spent on Capitol Hill, lobbying, petitioning, arguing for its budget to be increased.) Now, in the years preceding *perestroika*, the NED was one of only a handful of American organizations to support Russian democrats. But as was the case with Western statesmen, including even Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher, the NED was thrown into a certain confusion by *perestroika*. In Mikhail Gorbachev's Soviet Union there were government "reformers" on the one hand, and a popular revolt on the other. How was one to choose? The situation called above all for a clear understanding of what was going on and an unwavering policy of seeking to strengthen the nascent and struggling movement for democracy. Instead, the NED floundered, at best doing little and at worst doing damage.

Take the problem of grants for publishing. Several years ago, the distinction between the official and the unofficial press was clear: the former was Communist controlled and government funded, while the latter could usually be counted on to be democratically oriented and, of course, to have virtually no resources of its own. To some extent then, singling out any of the various underground papers or magazines for support could be justified. Today, however, most periodicals in the Soviet Union have to compete in the market in order to survive. Even what would seem from the NED's perspective to be a small grant to some publication—and it is difficult for Americans to grasp what even a modest number of dollars, and especially the American "connection," can mean in the way of relative advantage—creates only envy and bitter rivalry. More than that, when the NED, as it does, singles out this or that émigré magazine or Moscow newspaper to underwrite, it corrupts both the market and the independence of the press: as the prices of paper and printing get artificially pumped up, the unofficial publications find themselves competing for foreign grants, rather than for Soviet readers, in order to survive.


OUR POLITICAL PROGRAM REPUDIATED.... OUR LEADERS RIDICULED AND DENOUNCED.... OUR PARTY IN TOTAL DECLINE AND RETREAT....
I FEEL JUST LIKE THE AMERICAN DEMOCRATS!
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There has been a similar distortion in the publication of books. In 1990 and 1991 the NED gave a Russian publisher grants to produce a series of books by American Sovietologists. What such grants have actually done is help to stifle competition in the book market. To cite just the one case I am best acquainted with, at the end of last year my book, *To Build a Castle*, was published in an initial printing of two hundred thousand. Such is the hunger of the reading public that the book was sold out in a couple of weeks and the publishing house, Democratic Russia, made a healthy profit. But, the publisher told me, six months later a printing of that size would not even cover expenses. Printers in the Soviet Union today demand substantial payment in hard currency, something that cannot be generated by selling books to Soviet readers. One way to describe NED support for Soviet book publishing, therefore, is to say that the United States Congress is spending taxpayer's money to promote books in Russia that most Western readers never bothered to buy, and in so doing, to help kill off any fair competition in the emerging Soviet book market.

But this is a minor annoyance compared to the political corruption being

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bred by the dollars of the "promoters of democracy." For instance, the congressional code of ethics would surely forbid members of Congress from accepting foreign subsidies for political activities. Apparently, what is unacceptable for an American is commendable for a Russian. Western funds have been routinely provided to various members of the Supreme Soviet as well as to other elected officials in order to "encourage" democratic activity. Last year the NED gave $15,000 to the Social Judicial Commission of the Russian Federation for it to work out "legal safeguards for civil organizations" and another $15,000 to the Constitutional Commission of the Russian Supreme Soviet to aid it in drafting a new constitution. Again, it is hard for Americans to imagine how much money $15,000 is in present-day Moscow. It is something like half a million rubles, enough to feed one hundred Russian families for a whole year. What does a constitutional commission need? Pens and paper—and perhaps a few pounds of coffee to keep it awake. How many French francs did the Founding Fathers need to write the American Constitution? How will the unemployed, but not unemployable, former KGB agents manage to refrain from creating corruption scandals when the opportunity arises to discredit the democratic forces in the eyes of hungry people?

Naturally, the NED is not the only institution involved here. Private foundations and activist groups, large and small, Left and Right, are equally guilty of contributing to this mess. They believe they are promoting democracy by helping their "own" respective Russians, and no doubt also honestly believe that what they are furthering is a healthy competition in the marketplace of ideas. In reality what they are promoting and furthering is an altogether unhealthy competition for foreign funds.

Democrat du Jour

IRONICALLY, the bigger the donor, the likelier that it will end up making serious mischief. If in the judgment of the NED an obscure émigré magazine or 15 American Sovietologists are the best champions of democracy, pseudo-democrats like Eduard Shevardnadze are bound to attract the sympathy (along with vastly larger stipends) of the bigger foundations, especially now that he heads something so profitably named as the "Democratic Reform Movement." Shevardnadze is best known to the Russian people—if not, obviously, to wide-eyed Westerners like Secretary of State James Baker—as the bloody executioner of his own fellow Georgians in the mid Seventies. They cannot be inspired by him, nor will they ever trust him. Never mind. The West, should it now be losing faith in that other great democrat, Mikhail Gorbachev, can now offer them a different chosen beneficiary, Eduard Shevardnadze. For a while, that is.

Meanwhile, freedom and democracy will prevail among the peoples of the Soviet Union because, and only because, they do not want to deal with the devil any longer. Maybe the West will belatedly share their longing and learn how to act on it wisely. □

THE RED ARMY BLUES

A demoralized army let the plotters down. Will it now support democracy?

HENRY PLATER-ZYBERK

WHEN, on the morning of August 19, the Soviet news agency TASS informed the world of events in the USSR, there were few in the West who predicted the coup would collapse. Three members of the new eight-man Emergency Committee virtually guaranteed the success of the putsch: the heads of the army, Marshal Dmitri Yazov, of the KGB, Vladimir Kryuchkov, and of the Ministry of the Interior, Boris Pugo. They were supported by all three First Deputy Ministers of Defense, Generals Moiseyev (also Chief of the General Staff), Shlyaga (also Chief of the Military-Political Directorate), and Kochetov. They were also backed by some of the more important Deputy Ministers, Generals Varennikov (Commander of the Ground Forces), Achalov (responsible for reform of the Ministry of Defense and the withdrawal from Eastern Europe), Mikhailov (Chief of Military Intelligence), and Kalinin (Commander of Moscow Military District), as well as by the top KGB officers, Generals Grushko (First Deputy Chairman of the KGB), Titov (head of the Counterintelligence Directorate), Sergeyev (Chief of the Military Counterintelligence Directorate), and Plekhanov (Chief of the Protection Service Directorate). The First Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs, Boris Gromov, who was the last commander of the Soviet contingent in Afghanistan, had publicly criticized the leadership of the country in the past, and his support for the takeover was certain.

And yet it failed. The main reason for the collapse of the coup must have been the supreme confidence of its organizers. They did not expect resistance either on the streets or in the armed forces, and evidently made no plans beyond declaring the changes and saturating the capital with troops. Their chain of command was not secure; they had no contingency plan or back-up units. They allowed Yeltsin to communicate with the world and with the crowds standing in front of Russia's Supreme Soviet, and permitted Gorbachev's bodyguards to stay with him during his detention. The takeover failed because of their astonishing ineptness.

The fact that they were dealing with a population some of whose members were not prepared to be intimidated after a few years of relative freedom was not the most vital factor in their failure. The initial reaction of most of the population was one of apathy, and even two days later the crowd supporting Yeltsin was estimated at fifty

Mr. Plater-Zyberk works with the Center for Defense Studies, King's College, London, and is an associate researcher at Sandhurst's Soviet Studies Research Center.

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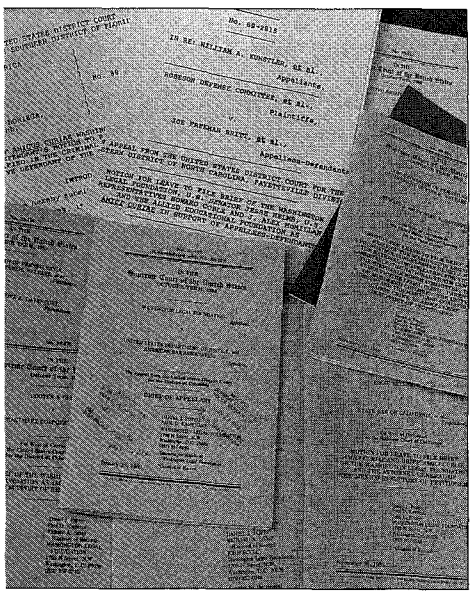

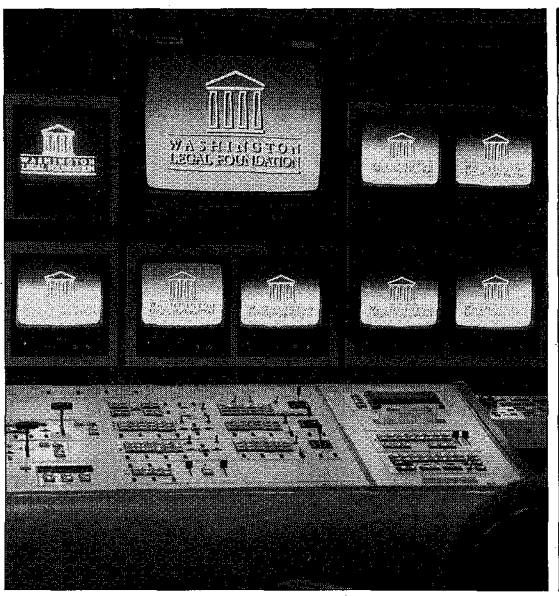

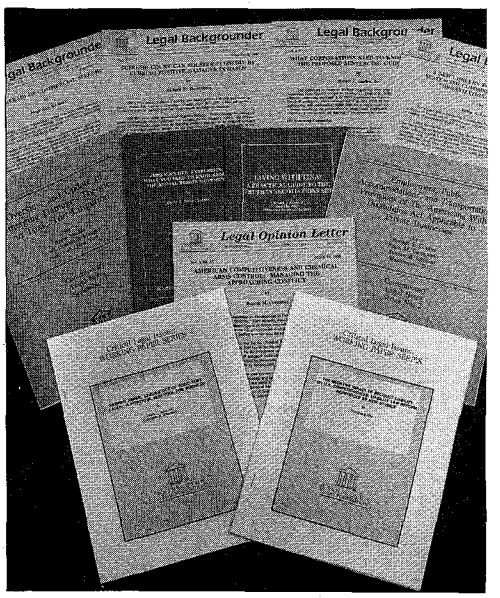

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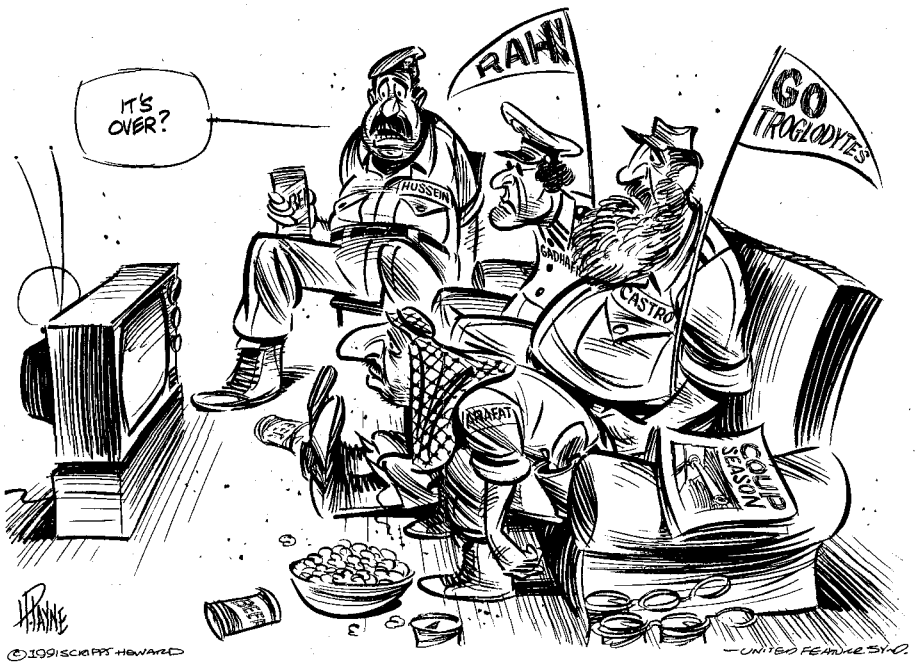
thousand people—in a city of approximately nine million inhabitants. The main reason for the collapse of the coup was that a significant number of commanders of units ordered onto the streets to suppress the protestors refused to do so.

It should not be forgotten that the army had showed much less inhibition in dealing with the Lithuanians and Georgians. And yet this time, the most important commanders failed to obey orders. Commanders of the army's elite Taman and Kantemir Divisions, the Ministry of Internal Affairs' Dzerzhinsky Division, and special Alpha units of the KGB refused to attack the crowds. The commander of airborne troops, Lieutenant General Grachev, and his deputy, Major General Lebed, who in the past had criticized Gorbachev's leadership publicly, refused to cooperate. The 106th Guards Air Assault Division in Tula and 98th Guards Air Assault Division in Kishinev declined to move after Grachev's arrest, and the 103rd Guards Air Assault Division, which some time ago was put under the command of the KGB Border Guards Directorate, was put on standby. But it was doubtful whether these troops would shoot at unarmed crowds. In theory Marshal Yazov had at his disposal the Military Intelligence special-forces brigades (one in every military district) under the command of Major General Isayev, but their cooperation was far from certain, and General Shaposhnikov—commander of the Air Force, which would have had to transport the troops to Moscow—refused to support the coup.

It still remains unclear why so many commanders failed to support the gang of eight. After all, the Soviet armed forces were one of the main victims of *perestroika*. The pullout from Eastern Europe and Mongolia had increased the number of NCOs and officers without housing from 173,000 in 1989 to 270,000 by mid 1991. Both officers and NCOs are poorly rewarded for their services. A salary of a first-class interceptor pilot with the rank of colonel is 20 per cent lower than that of some of Moscow's bus drivers. In 1989, 176,000 students serving in the armed forces were released from military service, which created chaos in many units and deprived them of some of their most intelligent servicemen. Many officers serving in hostile Republics are not allocated accommodation and are the targets of well organized hate campaigns supported by the local authorities. Many combat units have been used as unpaid industrial and agricultural labor to help prop up the staggering economy and bring in the harvest. Not surprisingly, mid-level commanders blamed the shortcomings on inept politicians and the top people in the Ministry of Defense. Furthermore, many officers in airborne forces and other elite units fought in Afghanistan and are bound by the common experience and by a profound distaste for the political leadership. These younger officers may have more say in a restructured Soviet or Russian armed force, as General Shaposhnikov, the new Minister of Defense, has announced that 80 per cent of the top military commanders are to be replaced.



Cleaning Up the Mess

THE NEW Soviet/Russian leaders will have to tackle all the problems that were facing their country before the coup, plus those resulting from it. More than seven decades of suffering and injustice under the Communist government, preceded by turbulent centuries of authoritarian rule, cannot be put right without hurting many millions of people who are not to blame for the existing situation and who are both victims of Stalin's resettlement policies. The problems resulting from the independence of some of the Republics, coupled with the country's failing economy, will provoke mass migration and result in disturbance and bloodshed.

The Republics are impatient to leave the Union. No leader of a Republic demanding true independence will accept a Union treaty which requires (as the one proposed before the coup did) central Union control of military policy and state security, the establishment of a single system of conscription and military service, control of the border areas, control of troop activity and disposition of military sites on the territory of the Republics, and control of defense-industry enterprises. Neither will an independent country accept the stationing of a foreign army on its territory unless it is forced to do so. If the new Soviet/Russian leadership decides to keep the Union together it will not be able to do so by democratic means, although the scale of bloodshed at this stage would probably be relatively small.

The independence of most of the Republics would not only create chaos and mass migration, it would also cut Russia off, geographically, from Central Europe and necessitate a complete restructuring of the Soviet/Russian armed forces. The three TVDs (theaters of military action in time of war) would probably be abolished, as would many military districts. Movement of large numbers of troops and huge amounts of hardware, and the creation of a new infrastructure at their relocation sites, would take years and

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cost billions. It would also delay the pullout of Soviet troops from Germany and Poland. The shifting of mobile launchers of nuclear missiles and nuclear-weapon-carrying aircraft can be accomplished relatively easily. However, the cost of removing hardened rocket silos to Russia could ruin a stronger economy than that of the Soviet Union.

Moreover, the newly created countries would have their own political ambitions. Radical movements in Byelorussia, Lithuania, and especially the Ukraine have already expressed an interest in the territories of some of their neighbors. Moldova is likely to become a part of Rumania despite current denials by both sides, and the Kaliningrad region on the Baltic coast, which is part of the Russian Republic, would be completely cut off from Mother Russia. Most, if not all, of the new countries would wish to create their own armed forces, thus disrupting the uneasy balance in Central and Eastern Europe and necessitating the renegotiation of some international treaties.

Having only recently discovered the advantages of a democratic system, mainly for the purpose of gaining power, Yeltsin may decide, with or without Gorbachev's help, that keeping the Union together—Soviet or not—is a priority. He would then be the leader of a new Russian Empire, held together with the help of the armed forces and by the threat of cutting off supplies of raw materials to unruly Republics. If the coup ended in failure, this was only a rare and happy chapter in Russia's turbulent history. However, the chapter does not end, "And they lived happily ever after," but rather: "To be continued." □

BUSH'S SLOW REACTION

Before the coup, U.S. policy was to help Gorbachev keep the USSR together. It still is.

WILLIAM McGURN

ONE MONTH before the coup attempt in the Soviet Union, President Bush met with leaders of the three Baltic nations in the Roosevelt Room of the White House. In addition to Bush, Secretary of State James Baker, Chief of Staff John Sununu, National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft, and Deputy Security Advisor Robert Gates were in attendance. But Bush dominated the meeting. The first words out of his mouth were somewhat defensive. "This is the fifth meeting we've had with Baltic leaders in the last year," he told them.

Maybe so, but the meetings had always been awkward. Although the United States has never recognized the Soviet annexation of Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia—Baker likes to note that the three Baltic flags still fly in the State Department lobby with those of all the other nations of the world—the Bush Administration found itself in the position of withholding recognition from the governments these countries have freely chosen for themselves on the odd grounds that this would be injurious to reform in the Soviet Union. Aware of Bush's caution, the Baltic leaders did not ask for recognition then, but they did ask for the White House to nudge Mikhail Gorbachev in the right direction. This they never got. According to Baker, it was up to the Balts to find a way for Gorbachev to "save face."

When they quoted this line at a press conference after leaving the White House, Baker denied having said it, and at a later meeting in Berlin with the foreign ministers of these same states he expressed some irritation that his comments were made public. The incident is significant, not so much for any effect on policy but for what it reveals about the Administration's mindset going into that dramatic week in August. The idea was that reform and democracy were emanating from Gorbachev and the Kremlin and that the various Republics were irritants, a theme Bush gratuitously sounded in his speech in Kiev.

Dangerous Tilt

NOW, it's not fair to blame Bush for not foreseeing the power grab in Moscow. But it is fair to note that the way events played out demonstrated that the President and his key advisors (the exceptions being Defense Secretary Dick Cheney, Vice President Dan Quayle, and Robert Gates) had not attached the proper weights to the players and movements inside the Soviet Union; it is even arguable that the Administration's tilt toward the center encouraged the coup leaders. And the most grievous misreading was of the man of the hour: Russian President Boris Yeltsin.

"The fact that George Bush's official schedule allotted only 15 minutes with Boris Yeltsin during the President's visit to Moscow shows how behind the curve he has been," says Adrian Karatnycky, a foreign-policy advisor with the AFL-CIO and author of *The Hidden Nations*. "What he failed to grasp is that the only instruments for the democratic reforms he wants to see in the Soviet Union are from democrats who want to separate from that Union."

True, there have been a number of other legitimate considerations operating here. For one thing, while a democratic Russia is certainly in America's long-term interests, in the short term the U.S. had foreign-policy considerations (e.g., support during the Gulf War) that only Gorbachev could address. For another, Gorbachev was the man with his finger on the nuclear button. Even Yeltsin needed Gorbachev as a pretext for opposing the coup leaders.

The problem in all this was not the Administration's dealing with Gorbachev, but its dealing with him exclusively. From the start Bush and his advisors invested far too much political capital in the person of a Communist Party leader who no longer has a party. Partly this was just the structural bias of governments: Bush had to prefer dealing with the leader of a

Mr. McGurn is NR's Washington Bureau Chief.

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single Soviet Union to dealing with 15 leaders of separate Republics whose histories mean nothing to him and whose grievances are viewed as obstructionist; when Baker went to Belgrade to thump for something as ridiculous as Yugoslavia's "territorial integrity," it was a warm-up for his treatment of the Soviet Republics.

This was especially true of Bush's treatment of Yeltsin, who like Gorbachev was mistakenly viewed in terms of his person rather than the forces he represents. "Bush's attitude with Yeltsin is sort of his attitude toward Newt Gingrich," says one Administration official. "I mean he agrees with him and all, but somehow he's just not his type of guy—troublesome, sort of uncouth, doesn't play by the rules, and so on."

The Administration's view of the Republics forced it into a number of blunders that in hindsight look shameful: the shabby treatment of Lithuanian President Kazimiera Prunskiene when she came to Washington for a White House meeting in May 1990 and had her limousine denied entrance to the grounds; the appointment of Robert Strauss as Bush's envoy to Moscow, another Establishment type who is simply not equipped to deal with the Russian reality today; the decision to include the Baltic states in granting the Soviets Most Favored Nation status; and the baffling reluctance to recognize the democratic governments of the Baltics even after everyone else had. All this was symbolized by Bush's speech in Kiev, in which the President condemned "a suicidal nationalism based upon ethnic hatred."

When the memoirs are written, that speech—delivered on August 1, less than three weeks before the coup—will go down as the low point of George Bush's foreign policy. As it happens, the offending line was not in the original drafts of the speech; it was inserted later, probably by Scowcroft (whose *New York Times* oped piece the day before the coup, "Bush Got It Right in the Soviet Union," will go down in history as only slightly less ridiculous than Chamberlain's "peace in our time" comment). The point is not just that Bush had the moral case backward, elevating an artificial union based on seven decades of brute force over the legitimate aspirations of real nations. It was that the Kiev speech showed Bush really didn't know what he was talking about. The threat to *glasnost* was not from the Republics but from the hardline unionists. And to speak of "suicidal nationalism" in the Ukraine, was, despite all the qualifiers, an unwarranted slap in the face to those who are transforming the USSR into the kind of society we can live with.

The irony of the situation is that it is Yeltsin the separatist and not Gorbachev the unionist who is the key to any future union or confederation. Yeltsin knows force must be replaced with consent if his own nation, Russia, is to prosper. Thus Yeltsin has already made arrangements with a number of Republics, and they know that August was not the first time he showed his mettle. Back in January, when Gorbachev sided with the hard-liners and tried to crack heads in the Baltics, Yeltsin's appeal to Russian troops not to fire on civilians (essentially asking them to disobey orders) prevented a great deal of bloodshed. Today Russia has bigger problems than occupying its neighbors, and if there is a threat it comes from the Kremlin and not the Russian Parliament.

The Real Enemies

'BEFORE these events, everyone talked about the danger of Russian nationalism and ethnic rivalries," says Ojars Kalnins, a spokesman for the Latvian embassy here. "But when things did break down, it's interesting that nowhere did ethnic tensions break out. All the aggression was directed at Communism and Sovietism. Those are our enemies—not Russians."

The prism through which he continues to view the Soviet Union is America 1861, even though the more apt analogy is America 1776. At a press conference a week after the coup had folded, Bush was still capable of the gratuitious snipe, responding sarcastically to a reporter's question about a Ukrainian group by saying, "You're asking me about some public-works committee in downtown Kiev, and you want to know if we support them." But there are signs of change: Bush let Gorbachev know right away that the Soviet leader's initial post-coup appointments, since reversed, were not acceptable. He also had good intelligence about the mechanics of the coup itself, from the start raising questions about its chances for success—in stark contrast to his treatment of Peking after Tiananmen Square.

In policy terms, this is bound to have implications. Aid for the central government has become all but impossible, and there will undoubtedly be some public shift toward the democratic forces in the Republics. And the strong desire of the Republics to have ties with the U.S. means that Bush will still come up a winner. "It's better to be lucky than right," says one Bush official, "and fortunately for us events are taking care of themselves." □

WHY GORBACHEV LOST

When the irresistible force of a free people met the immovable object of the Communist system, Mr. Gorbachev was out of a job.

DAVID SATTER

WITH FAILURE of the coup attempt, a page has been turned in the history of the Soviet Union. The country could descend into chaos; it could make progress toward democracy; it could even fall victim to another coup. But whatever happens it will not return to "Gorbachevism," the attempt to free consciousness while preserving the society's totalitarian institutions intact.

Mr. Satter, a Soviet specialist, is Hooper Fellow at the Foreign Policy Research Institute in Philadelphia and covers the Soviet Union for Reader's Digest.

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History has moved on. The moment for Gorbachev's foredoomed attempt to combine the uncombinable has passed.

The events of the last few months illustrate well the irreconcilability of the interests of the Soviet people and the military–industrial complex.

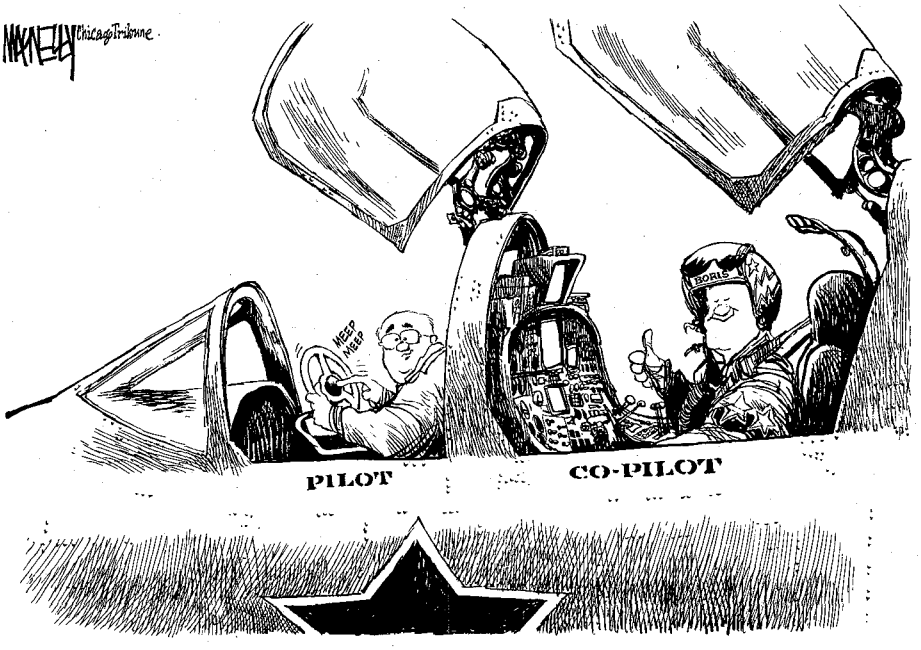
Last October, Gorbachev agreed to the Shatalin plan for shifting the Soviet Union to a market economy in five hundred days. The plan provided for eventually putting 70 per cent of industrial enterprise in private hands. At the last minute, however, Gorbachev came under pressure from the military and industrial interests and the plan was dropped.

The scuttling of the Shatalin plan was followed by an attempt to reinforce central planning. This May, however, under pressure from the devastating coal miners' strike and the victory of Boris Yeltsin in the Russian elections, Gorbachev agreed to the "Nine plus One" plan, under which control over natural resources was to pass to the Republics. It was the prospect of a new Union treaty based on this agreement that pushed the leaders of the military–industrial complex to attempt to seize power.

From the very beginning, there was an oversimplified quality to Gorbachev's reputation in the West as a liberal reformer. Gorbachev was ready to reduce repression and diminish the role of the Party, but the purpose was to modernize the Soviet Union's state bureaucracy, whose leaders remained members of the Party.

This, in turn, was a matter of military necessity. In August 1982, Israeli pilots flying American F-15 and F-16 airplanes destroyed 81 Syrian MiG-21 and MiG-23 fighters over the Bekaa Valley without losing a single plane. This disaster was followed by President Reagan's announcement on March 23, 1983, that American technology had reached the point that it would be possible to intercept Soviet missiles before they hit the United States. These developments convinced the Soviet leaders that they had to take the risks of reform.

Reform projects had circulated in the higher levels of the Party for years before Gorbachev's accession to power. Abel Aganbegyan, an early Gorbachev economic advisor, outlined the crisis of the Soviet economy as early as 1962.



Once in power, Gorbachev took it upon himself to push through a reform program; however, he met total opposition from the all-powerful Party apparatus. Obliged to operate through some other means, Gorbachev decided to recruit the Soviet people themselves, inspiring them with *glasnost*, the controlled release of truthful information, a decision which was to determine the course of events for the next six years.

Much has been written about Gorbachev's attempts to balance between Left and Right; in fact, the policy of playing off one force against another was inherent in Gorbachev's decision to use democratic passions to defang the Party apparatus in the interests of the state machine.

At first, there were attempts to confine *glasnost* to a "Leninist" framework, but this proved difficult. In the first place, any fixed limits had to be enforced; this entailed a gift of power to the enforcers, who were the anti-reform forces that Gorbachev had to fight. At the same time, Gorbachev was rapidly pushed by Party recalcitrance and the ever-present threat of a palace coup to develop a second, "presidential" structure of power, which involved semi-free elections to the previously purely formal soviets. This had the effect of creating further possibilities for freedom. The result was that free speech proved impossible to stop and *glasnost* expanded steadily to demolish the entire fictional world of the ideology.

Breaking the Spell

THE PROBLEM was that in seeking to change the Soviet Union, Gorbachev approached the Soviet people purely instrumentally. He and other Communist "progressives" could cynically denounce everything that they had previously taught, but for millions of Soviet citizens, the breaking of the magic spell of the ideology created a spiritual crisis. Soviet citizens awoke to the realization of an enormous breach of trust.

The first result was an explosion of nationalism. When it became clear that repression had eased, mass demonstrations took place in Armenia and the Baltics and then spread to virtually every national Republic. In 1989, the first massive strikes broke out in the Novokuznetsk coal mines; strikes spread to other coal-mining areas with the speed of a chain reaction, as if Soviet workers were determined to express their anger all at once.

The sense of betrayal became all the deeper when Soviet citizens began to realize the truly limited nature of the reforms that Gorbachev had in mind.

The first reforms he introduced provided for a degree of autonomy for enterprises. The enterprises were still required to fill state orders, which often accounted for 90 per cent or more of production, but there was now the possibility of selling some of the remaining production at negotiated prices. It also became possible for citizens to form cooperatives and for collective farmers to rent land.

These changes, however, all took place within the context of central

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planning; although they did introduce elements of economic freedom, they in no way changed the status of the state's bureaucratic machine. What they did do was disorganize the planned economy. Factory directors raised salaries to attract workers and concentrated on expensive items, while cooperatives, forced to pay bribes for scarce supplies, in turn engaged in superexploitation, helping to fuel an explosion of inflation.

By last year, it had become obvious that the way out of a fast-deteriorating economic situation was privatization, and particularly the creation of private property in land; but here the interests of the country came squarely into conflict with those of the military–industrial machine.

There had been considerable talk of "collective property" and cooperative property, of joint stock companies run by the workers. But all of these forms of ownership allowed for control and manipulation by the state. In fact, in the case of joint stock companies in the absence of private ownership, there was a need for more bureaucratic interference rather than less.

The institution of private property, on the other hand, would make it possible actually to dissolve the state bureaucracy and to direct resources in some direction other than the military–industrial complex. In the Soviet Union, the share of the national product that goes to wages is 35 per cent, compared to 70 per cent in the West. The difference goes to pay for the Soviet military machine.

On the matter of private property, however, Gorbachev refused to yield. At first, he justified his refusal ideologically, describing private property as the "basis of the exploitation of man by man"; with time, he no longer bothered, resisting instead on behalf of the interests he had always served and even trying to stall the implementation of the Shatalin plan (before dropping it altogether) by calling for a referendum on the question of private ownership of land.

The result was that a serious gap opened up between the consciousness of Soviet citizens, which had been freed of socialist illusions, and the nature of their institutions, which continued to be organized on socialist lines. This was a formula for disaster. If, before, the Soviet Union owed its stability to the fact that its pyramidal social and economic structure was reinforced by the imaginary universe of Marxist–Leninist ideology, now consciousness and institutions came into open conflict.

The combined pressure of national separatism and the demands for economic autonomy of groups like the coal miners posed a dire threat to the unified economic complex that is critical to military procurement. This intensified the conflict between the bureaucracy and the people and put Gorbachev in the position, even before the coup, of changing positions like a weather cock in a frantic effort to hold on to power.

The Soviet Union is now entering the twilight of the Gorbachev period. At this point, Gorbachev is no longer necessary to anyone. The powerful interests which staged the August coup could regroup for a bloodthirsty encore. Or the forces of democratic change could triumph. In neither case would there be a need for a man who, in his constant maneuvering, has succeeded in alienating both.

Mikhail Gorbachev cut the Soviet Union loose from its previous moorings, and it is now adrift. The best hope for the future is that it will find leaders capable of doing what Gorbachev could not do: put aside tactical considerations and the lust for power and guide it to safe harbor on the basis of fairness and respect for the dignity of man. □

YELTSIN RISING

Boris Yeltsin was a Communist, became a democrat, is a hero. Will he be a statesman?

EUGENE METHVIN

BORIS YELTSIN'S entire life prepared him to climb onto that Red Army tank in front of the Russian Federation headquarters. He was a born rebel, and a born leader—"a little bit of a hooligan," he recalled in his 1990 autobiography, *Against the Grain*. From first grade on he was elected class leader—and prankster. Once when the teacher was out, he persuaded the entire class to jump out the first-floor window. At his primary-school graduation, about age 12, he stood before six hundred parents, teachers, and pupils, asked permission to speak, praised some teachers, then denounced one as unfit to teach because she mocked and abused pupils and even made them clean her house and feed her pig. He was expelled, but defiantly appealed—and got the teacher fired.

Such rebellion marked his entire career. As Party boss of Sverdlovsk province, he refused Kremlin orders to turn the apartment house where Brezhnev had once lived into a museum. (He lost that one.) In 1987, by now Moscow Party boss and Politburo member, he did to Gorbachev exactly what he had done to his grammar-school teacher. At a Central Committee meeting he rose, demanded to speak, and tore into Gorbachev for attempting to reform by half-measures and for tolerating a growing "cult of personality"—an explosive evocation of Stalinism.

Yeltsin's great advantage over Gorbachev is that he has shown a large capacity to learn from the dynamic experience of freedom in the 1985–91 *glasnost* era, while Gorbachev, having initiated the reforms, clung to old doctrine. Situationally Yeltsin's career has parallels with Washington's and with Lincoln's. Like Washington, he has the opportunity to become a monarch or to refuse. Like Lincoln, amid domestic turmoil he may be obliged to become a temporary dictator, closing newspapers and jailing opponents, in order to preserve constitutionalism. These 1862 words of Lincoln's summarize Yeltsin's ideological hegira and

Mr. Methvin is a senior editor at Reader's Digest.

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current predicament: "The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present. As our case is now so must we think anew and act anew. We must disenthrall ourselves and save our country."

Last February, former political prisoner Sergei Kovalev, now chairman of the Russian Parliament's human-rights committee, told *Washington Post* correspondent David Remnick: "We were all very hesitant about Yeltsin at first, but he has proved capable of change and understanding. Yeltsin and his popular support are going to be vital to any battle for human rights and reform."

A Different Person

YELTSIN'S ability to learn made him a magnet for all the reformers who grew disgusted with Gorbachev's ideological stagnation; Shevardnadze, Yakovlev, Tatyana Zaslavskaya, Stanislav Shatalin, all once close Gorbachev advisors. Yeltsin "was the first politician in the history of the USSR to voluntarily quit the high schedule of Party appointments," noted Sergey Kredov in *Rabochaya Tribuna*. He did so because he recognized "that his positive program of that time had run out," and instead of taking refuge in the Party *apparat*, "the honest Yeltsin opted for Golgotha. To my way of thinking," said Kredov, "Yeltsin 1987 and Yeltsin 1990 are different people in terms of their political views. Thank heavens. . . . Thus far the growth of society's self-awareness had been identical to the growth of Yeltsin himself. With him came deliverance from illusions."

Yeltsin told *New York Times*man Bill Keller in August 1990, "I was a product of the time. I absorbed a lot from the system that is now so sick. I'm in the process of a self-revision, though I am a bit old for it."

He moved light years on economics. His first visit to the United States, in September 1989, was the catalyst. He spoke then of "privatizing" only 10 to 15 per cent of the economy. But he left a convert to free enterprise: "We must incorporate the experience of the United States. The U.S. knows how to run things, how to live well. It is realistic and knows how to handle innovation. The Soviet Union has lost sight of reality and there's too much theory."

In his autobiography, published in March 1990, Yeltsin still expressed misgivings about private property. But in a formal speech on his second U.S. visit this June, he declared: "We are firmly committed to the principle of free enterprise as the basis of economic reform in Russia." He spent a day visiting a Manhattan garment manufacturer, questioning workers, including some Soviet émigrés, about wages and working conditions. And on ABC's *Nightline*, he said: "Highly qualified workers we do have, perhaps no less qualified than American workers. But he gets one-tenth of what the American worker gets. . . . He doesn't have his own property. He doesn't own land. He doesn't own the factory, the enterprise, the shop, or anything. Now he's going to have the option to be owner . . . and there'll be a real interest in good work being done at these enterprises and you will see how he works. He will work better."

In July 1990, Yeltsin adopted the radical "Five Hundred Day Plan" for marketization worked out by Grigory Yavlinsky, 38, a Young Turk who broke with his mentor, Gorbachev's Prime Minister Nikolai Ryzhkov, over preserving central planning. Yavlinsky's six-hundred-page document was literally a program for dismantling Communism. "It will represent the storming of the Winter Palance in reverse," said *Izvestia* commentator Mikhail Berger. The idea of selling inefficient state-run factories and collective farms to the public excited Yeltsin. By now president of Russia's parliament, he made Yavlinsky Russia's deputy prime minister for economic reform.

Yeltsin won Gorbachev's agreement to launch the Five Hundred Day Plan on October 1, 1990. But then Gorbachev reversed himself. For his own reasons, he decided on a radical swing to the right, joining the Party old guard, KGB, army, and military–industrial complex. Gorby's right turn led to Foreign Minister Shevardnadze's resignation and was followed by the KGB murder of 15 Lithuanians and five Latvians in January in what was designed to be a Budapest-like countercoup. But world reaction to photos of a Soviet tank crushing a Lithuanian stopped Gorby with half-measures once again. Yeltsin flew to Estonia to show his support for the Baltic independence movement, and publicly demanded Gorbachev's resignation in a nationwide TV interview. By spring, Gorbachev had reversed himself again, embraced Yeltsin and Russian autonomy from "the center," which would let Yeltsin carry out the Five Hundred Day Plan independently. That in turn brought on the Sixty Hour Coup. The Five Hundred Day Plan may finally begin on October 1, 1991, exactly one year late.

Radio Liberty journalist Alexander Rahr points to another respect in which Yeltsin has grown: his regard for religion and Russian culture. In this he seeks to bridge the chasm dividing Russians since Peter the Great, "Westernizers" versus "Russifiers," personified most recently by Sakharov and Solzhenitsyn.

Indeed, in his autobiography Yeltsin welcomes the regeneration of the church in the USSR: "I am convinced that the moment is coming when, with its message of eternal, universal values, it will come to the aid of our society. For in these words: Thou shalt not kill; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, lie those very moral principles that will enable us to survive even the most critical situations." Yeltsin started attending Russian Orthodox Church services, bringing TV cameramen along. In June he told the National Press Club in Washington: "I do not have a real faith in God. That's the way I was brought up. But I hope this is in part made up for by my two little granddaughters and my grandson, who instead of going to the Young Pioneers, went to church to be baptized, and who wear little crosses." On the weekend following the coup, he was in church again.

Sign of the Cross

YELTSIN won more than 57 per cent of about eighty million votes in the June election. At his inauguration in the Kremlin he stood alone and recited the oath of office, swearing "to adhere to the constitution and laws of the Russian federation, to defend its sovereignty, to defend its freedom and rights." Patriarch Aleksei II of the Russian Orthodox Church blessed Yeltsin with the sign of the cross: "By the will of God and the choice of the people, you are bestowed with the highest office in Russia. . . . We will pray for you." A full choir performed the triumphant

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"Glory" chorus from Glinka's *A Life for the Czar*. A red-white-and-blue Russian flag covered the huge hall's massive picture of Lenin.

In view of his present power, Yeltsin's inaugural address bears new scrutiny. He proclaimed: "Great Russia is rising from its knees. We shall surely transform it into a prosperous, law-based, democratic, peaceful, and sovereign state. The president is not a god, not a monarch, not a miracle worker. He is a citizen. . . . And in Russia the individual will become the measure of all things."

Yeltsin is now carrying out the de-Leninization and de-Communization of Russia. Last year, he threw Lenin's picture out of his office, leaving an empty nail in the wall. Feliks Dzerzhinsky's statue in front of KGB headquarters is gone, and soon Lenin's effigy will be removed from the Red Square mausoleum.

In the aftermath of the coup, Yeltsin padlocked the Party Central Committee headquarters, sealed its files for investigators, and persuaded Gorbachev to appoint Yeltsin's own men to head the KGB and the Interior and Defense Ministries. It was "a second coup," declared CBS correspondent Tom Fenton. And it was clearly Yeltsin's coup.

Now that his position and power are pre-eminent, Yeltsin will inevitably have to mute the trumpets of independence a bit. Russia itself has 31 autonomous ethnic regions and more than one hundred ethnic groups. If Wilsonian "self-determination of nations" were the rule, "that would create a map resembling Swiss cheese," notes the *Washington Post*'s David Remnick. Last September Yeltsin told nationalists in Kazan, in the Tatar Autonomous Republic, "Take as much independence as you can handle," assuring them, "Your decision will be final." He told *Times*man Bill Keller, who accompanied him on his tour of the hinterlands, that he hopes to negotiate treaties with these little enclaves for limited autonomy.

To his Tatar audience he suggested: "I don't know, perhaps you will decide to delegate your foreign relations to Russia. Why should you keep 170 embassies in 170 countries?" But a banner greeting him proclaimed: "Yeltsin is a good man. Freedom is better."

Still, if Yeltsin achieves his vision for a Russian commonwealth, boundaries will not matter much and Russian citizenship may be as proud a boast as Roman citizenship was in the Augustan age. Tadzhiks and Kirgizians alike would covet it.

In Washington Yeltsin was asked to predict what the Soviet Union will be like in the year 2000: "Our people have never yet had the chance to feel free, and that is the most important thing: that they have liberty. That is what the rule of law is all about. . . . The primary goal for us should be to build a state rooted in the rule of law that would guarantee rights to its citizens on a par with international standards so that we could join the international agreements and covenants on human rights that already exist. We want to achieve for all our citizens access to all the benefits of society and the courts, equal justice under law." A fitting pronouncement from Russia's first citizen. □

OUR OWN DEMOCRACY

Democracy can grow in Russia, but it must have local roots, and a people willing to tend it.

ALEKSANDR SOLZHENITSYN

THERE IS no escaping the fact that our country has cruelly forfeited the entire twentieth century: all our much-trumpeted achievements have turned out to be illusory. From a flourishing condition we have been hurled back to a state of semi-barbarity, and we are sitting amid the wreckage.

We hold passionate discussions about the kind of government system that would suit us from now on, and the kind that would not, since this, we claim, is the key to everything. Yet recovery is today not a matter of simply identifying the most convenient system of government and then hastily churning out a marvelous constitution, paragraph by paragraph. We must demonstrate better foresight than did our luckless fathers and grandfathers in 1917 so that we might not repeat the chaos of that February by putting ourselves at the mercy of tempting slogans and breathless orators, or otherwise reproducing the self-chosen path to a shameful conclusion. There is no guarantee whatever that the new leaders now coming to the fore will immediately prove to be far-sighted and sober-minded.

After a cannibalistic period lasting three-quarters of a century, after the exorbitant price we have already paid, and given the fact that in terms of the political spectrum we happen to have ended up on the side with a tradition of strong central authority, it behooves us not to make rash moves toward chaos. For as 1917 taught us, anarchy is the ultimate peril.

Unless one craves revolution, a state must possess the qualities of continuity and stability. Some elements of the current structure will have to serve for the time being for the simple reason that they already exist.

It goes without saying that we shall gradually reshape the entire state organism. This undertaking must begin at the margin somewhere; it should not be tackled all at once. What is clear is that the process should start at the local level, with grassroots issues. While preserving a strong central authority, we must patiently and persistently expand the rights of local communities.

With time we shall of course adopt some particular type of political structure, but in view of our total inexperience in such matters this may not be a felicitous choice at first, not some-

This article was adapted from Mr. Solzhenitsyn's Rebuilding Russia: Reflections and Tentative Proposals, *translated by Alexis Klimoff, to be published in November.* *Copyright © 1991 by Farrar, Straus & Giroux, Inc. All rights reserved.*

Rebuilding Russia *was, of course, written before the coup.*

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thing suited to the specific needs of our country. We must resolutely seek our own path here. We have lately been assuring ourselves that there is no need of any quest or reflection on our part, that it is simply a matter of adopting "the way it is done in the West" as quickly as possible. But in the West it is done in oh so many different ways, with every country following its own tradition. One might think that we are the only people who need neither look back nor pay heed to the wise things said in our country before we were born.

The strength or weakness of a society depends more on the level of its spiritual life than on its level of industrialization. Neither a market economy nor even general abundance constitutes the crowning achievement of human life. If a nation's spiritual energies have been exhausted, it will not be saved from collapse by the most perfect government structure or by any industrial development: a tree with a rotten core cannot stand. This is so because of all the possible freedoms the one that will inevitably come to the fore will be the freedom to be unscrupulous; that is the freedom that can be neither prevented nor anticipated by any law. It is an unfortunate fact that a pure social atmosphere cannot be legislated into being.

And that is why the destruction of our souls over three-quarters of a century is the most terrifying thing of all. It is terrible to see that the corrupt ruling class—the multimillion-strong appointed bureaucracy (*nomenklatura*) which serves Party and state—was incapable of voluntarily giving up any of the privileges it had appropriated to itself. For decades this class has lived at the expense of the people, and it would have liked to continue doing so.

And what about those glorious forces of *glasnost* and *perestroika*? Among these fashionable words we look in vain for the concept of *purification*. What we saw was a stampede toward *glasnost* of all those tainted voices which had given decades of loyal service to totalitarianism. Of every four troubadours of *glasnost*, three were former toadies of Brezhnevism, and who among them uttered a word of *personal* repentance instead of cursing the faceless "period of stagnation"? And the same individuals who for decades have befuddled the minds of university students continue to hold forth self-confidently from the rostrums of our humanities departments. Tens of thousands of smatterers in our country are tarnished by their hypocrisy and weather-vane mentality; must we really drag along these festering moral sores into our future?

West Germany was suffused with the feeling of repentance before the arrival of its economic boom. But in our country no one has even begun to repent. And all that *glasnost* is bedecked, festooned with the same old plump and heavy clusters of lies. Only we seem not to notice. That is a recipe for warped development.

Time to Think

IT WON'T DO to hope that our current "time of troubles" will be followed by some kind of tranquil period with ample opportunity "to sit down and think over" our plans for the future. History is a continuum, and no one will grant us the favor of any breathing spell, just as the Russian Constituent Assembly, in February 1917, was never given the chance "to sit down and think things over." So that no matter how painfully the burning issues of today weigh down upon us, it behooves us to give advance thought to the shape of our future arrangement.

Before the 1917 Revolution the bulk of our people had no experience with political concepts, and the ideas that were pounded into our heads by propaganda in the subsequent seventy years served only to cloud our minds. But now that our country has begun moving in the direction of real political life, and when the forms of the government-to-be are already being discussed, it is useful to focus on the precise meaning of some terms in order to prevent possible mistakes.

Plato, and Aristotle after him, identified three types of states. In the usual sequence these are: monarchy, or the rule of one; aristocracy, or the rule of the best or for the best purpose; and polity, or the rule of the people in a small city-state for the common good (we now term this democracy). It would appear that since that time no one has created any structure that could not be subsumed under these categories; the only additions were various types of constitutions. So we cannot be said to have much of a choice: the whole flow of modern history will unquestionably predispose us to choose democracy.

But in opting for democracy we must understand clearly just what we are choosing, what price we shall have to pay, and that we are choosing it as a means, not as an end in itself. The contemporary philosopher Karl Popper has said that one chooses democracy not because it abounds in virtues, but only in order to avoid tyranny. We choose it in full awareness of its faults and with the intention of seeking ways to overcome them.

Many new countries have in recent years suffered a fiasco just after introducing democracy, yet despite such evidence this same period has seen an elevation of democracy from a particular state structure into a sort of universal principle of human existence, almost a cult.

Following the bitter experience of 1917, when we plunged headlong into what we had thought was democracy, Vasily Maklakov, a prominent leader of the Constitutional Democrats, reminded us all of a simple truth by the following admission: "In order to function, democracy needs a certain level of political discipline among the populace." But this is precisely what we lacked in 1917, and one fears that there is even less of it today.

The aim of universal suffrage is to permit the Popular Will to be manifested: that genuine Will which is supposed to guide everything in a direction most advantageous to the people. Yet no one has been able to say whether such a single Will exists at all or to define its qualities. And it is remarkable that different systems of counting votes will produce different or even diametrically opposed readings of this Popular Will.

One should add that election campaigns involving large numbers of voters and conducted among an electorate with no direct knowledge of the candidates can be so frivolous and shrill that, given the frequent bias of the media, a large proportion of the voters may turn away in disgust. And television, though it can bring out a candidate's appearance as well as his public demeanor, does nothing to reveal his abilities as a statesman. Campaigns of this sort invariably entail the degradation of political thought. The very

(Continues on page 59)

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The Case for Macbeth

JOSEPH SOBRAN

AMERICAN liberals these days are having some of the same difficulties as Russian Communists. Not only is the faith dying; the saints are being exposed as scoundrels, even monsters. New research has been unkind to Franklin Roosevelt, John Kennedy, Martin Luther King, and Lyndon Johnson.

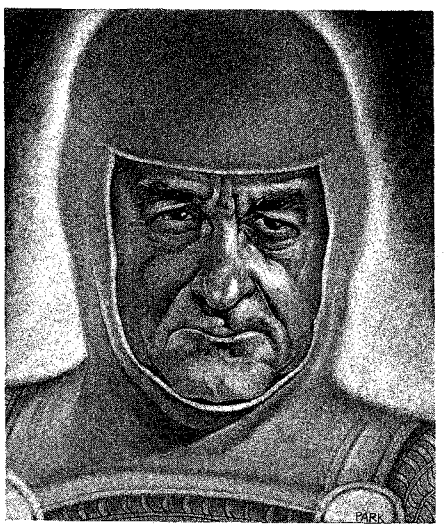
Thanks largely to Robert Caro, who is only halfway through his projected four-volume biography of Johnson, LBJ's reputation has suffered worst. Caro has put him squarely in the monster category, showing him as a man who would stop at nothing in his quest for power and wealth.

Robert Dallek's *Lone Star Rising* is a liberal's attempt to restore Johnson to the pantheon of "great" Presidents. Caro so far has brought Johnson's career up to 1948, the year he stole the Texas senatorial nomination from Coke Stevenson; Dallek's book, the first of two parts, covers LBJ's life up to 1960, the year he was elected Vice President. Comparisons between the two biographies are irresistible.

Lone Star Rising: Lyndon Johnson and His Times, 1908–1960, by Robert Dallek (Oxford, 721 pp., $30)

Caro's two volumes have been attacked as lurid in their portrayal of Johnson as a villain of mammoth dimensions; his account of the 1948 race, a gripping epic of skulduggery, has been accused of glorifying Stevenson for the purpose of blackening Johnson. Dallek doesn't try to compete with Caro's novelistic detail and narrative propulsion, but he does argue that the case was more ambiguous. Stuffing ballot boxes was common in Texas then; nobody can be sure, Dallek says, which man would have won in an honest race.

This argument doesn't say much for Johnson; at most, it proves he was no worse than his environment. But Dallek's version simply doesn't cope with the enormous mass of evidence, testimony, and overall coherence Caro provides. When you read Caro, you feel you have been with LBJ on the campaign trail; you can almost smell his sweat as he drives himself, enduring



Chang Park

the agony of a gallstone he couldn't stop to have treated, to get every possible vote by hook or by crook.

Moreover, Dallek confirms Caro in spite of himself. He gives strong grounds for suspecting that Johnson's people prevented a recount through furtive contact with Justice Hugo Black, who helped save LBJ's bacon with a crucial ruling. And to his credit, Dallek has unearthed other evidence of Johnson's illegal secret maneuverings throughout his career, as in his acquisition of radio and TV stations in his wife's name.

Dallek has done heroic research, and he fashions it into a consistently readable story. Yet, having read Caro's version, one can't help feeling that Dallek is missing the point of that story. A professional historian (at UCLA), he shrinks from certain large inferences toward which his data point. This might do honor to his scrupulousness; at times Caro seems to rush to judgment. All the same, the facts bear Caro out. There is too much in the record that establishes Johnson's venality, ruthlessness, and downright cruelty. His life seems a gloss on Burke's remark, "Criminal means, once tolerated, are soon preferred." LBJ's means included bullying, bribery, and blackmail; his inveterate habit of collecting dirt on colleagues played a large part in making him, as they say, "the most effective Majority Leader in the history of the Senate." His wiretapping of King was all in a day's work.

To be sure, there was more to Johnson than criminal tactics; the power of his personality is legendary. Few could resist his importunate approaches; he had a genius for sensing and pulling every individual's psychic levers. In one-on-one encounters, he was overpowering. To read Dallek's account of his years in the Senate is to marvel at the tactical brilliance of a man whose pursuit of power was utterly single-minded, unimpeded by any principle whatever.

This, unfortunately, is what Dallek seems not to comprehend. He keeps repeating that Johnson had a "genuine concern" for common folk and minorities, as shown by his support for every imaginable federal program; but this is like saying that a peddler of patent medicines has a genuine concern for the sick. Johnson's treatment of his underlings, driving and sometimes humiliating them, does not suggest pity as his ruling passion; he favored state interventions on all occasions because that was his line. He was a man of the State, who would have risen to power with equal skill and amorality in any political system. The more constituents he could find for his cure-alls, the more his own power was enhanced. Nobody has found a single case where Johnson's concern for human suffering led him to *oppose* state intervention.

Dallek seems to me not to be following the facts where they lead him, but to be softening his interpretation of LBJ's actual conduct in order to pre-

Mr. Sobran, NR's Critic-at-Large, writes a twice-a-week column for Universal Press Syndicate.

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serve his prior assumption that Johnson's Great Society established him as a great President. Of course a conservative, a libertarian, or a strict constructionist will simply reply that Johnson used bad means to achieve bad ends. And this is enough to make sense of the whole story. Johnson's lust for power and his greed for money were the only constants in his life, whether he was working within the law or against it; and they also shaped the way he *made* law. His generosity to the downtrodden consisted entirely in spending other people's money on them and reducing other people's freedoms for their sake.

Lyndon Johnson was not a man on whom subtlety should be wasted. Senator Joseph Clark of Pennsylvania, a liberal, said it all: "He was a typical Texan wheeler-dealer with no ethical sense whatever, but a great pragmatic ability to get things done." Dallek, on the whole, likes the things he got done, so that his judgment is more clouded—and cloudy—than Caro's (though Caro too seems to approve of the Great Society). The result is that Johnson and such henchmen as Abe Fortas and Bobby Baker come to roguish life in Caro's version, whereas in Dallek's they are relatively nebulous entities constructed from documents. Dallek's effort, estimable in many ways, is ill served by the controlling theory that LBJ was a humanitarian at heart. Can it be accidental that all the putative good he did also happened to serve his own turn every time? Was his manifest ability to switch principles at the drop of a Stetson just part of his odyssey toward liberal principles? Did the big furtive campaign donations he received from businessmen issue from public-spiritedness?

If you take the view that the more laws passed, the better, then Lyndon Johnson was a great President. But such bland approval of his record forces you to ignore the significance of half of what he did—and especially the way he did it. What emerges from every account of Johnson's career is that he used both cajolery and fear to control those around him. Dallek captures the cajolery, with obvious admiration; he even confronts a good deal of Johnson's deviousness; but he misses the element of fear, the tacit (and sometimes overt) threat of reprisal LBJ often used to get his way. Caro shows that even in college politics, Johnson was both the most powerful and the most hated man on campus, leaving behind him a bitterness that is still vivid in most of those who remember him from those days. Most Americans try to succeed by being liked; Johnson succeeded by being dangerous. He knew how to hurt people, and how to let them know he could. He knew how to help them, too, but only at the taxpayer's expense, and only when there was something in it for himself. To portray him as anything but a colossal scoundrel is almost to denigrate his specific gifts. □

Material Goods

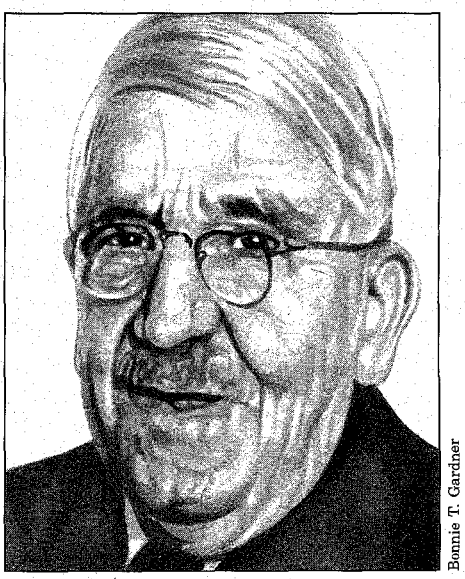
BRUCE FROHNEN

JOHN DEWEY is often referred to as "the philosopher of democracy." And one need not see this as a terribly complimentary appellation in order to find it fitting. Dewey was, after all, largely responsible for identifying democracy in the minds of many Americans—and almost all American intellectuals—as "the one, the ultimate, ethical ideal of humanity." And there's the rub.

John Dewey and American Democracy, by Robert B. Westbrook (Cornell University Press, 559 pp., $29.95)

The notion that political decision-making is the ultimate ethical experience is, in essence, a form of vacuous self-idolatry. Such a notion rests on replacement of the transcendent ethical principles which must guide all decent human relations by the "principle" that if we voted for it, it must be right. Such a notion itself rejects the will of God in favor of the will of the group—"justly, freely, and openly determined" to be sure. As Robert Westbrook half wittingly shows, Dewey was in large part responsible for replacing God with democratic or "practical" science as the center of American intellectual life. But what Mr. Westbrook cannot do, because his own radical politics make Dewey's attempted Deicide seem such an obvious good to him, is provide any clear insight into Dewey's wider effects on American thought and character.

Most of Mr. Westbrook's efforts in this surprisingly coherent piece of intellectual history are expended in "saving" Dewey from the charge that he was not really a radical. Dewey's truly radical socialism ought to be no secret. To be sure, it has been questioned over the years, but for purely instrumental reasons—because "liberals" who use his ideas like to present themselves as mainstream Americans,



Bonnie T. Gardner

and because those further left have never forgiven Dewey for opposing the spread of Stalinism.

Dewey's socialism grew logically from his deification of democratic politics. Traditional American democracy, intended by the Founders as a procedural protection of the substantive goods of family, church, neighborhood, and property, was, for Dewey, merely a façade covering "capitalist" class interest. Dewey sought to "democratize" all of life by subjecting all human activity (economic activity in particular) to the political will of the majority—a majority whose proper education in bureaucratic decision-making Dewey kindly volunteered to undertake as soon as the scourge of religion was removed from intellectual life.

Odd as it seems in retrospect, religion's hold on American intellectuals was finally destroyed by the importa-

Mr. Frohnen is a freelance writer living in Decatur, Georgia.

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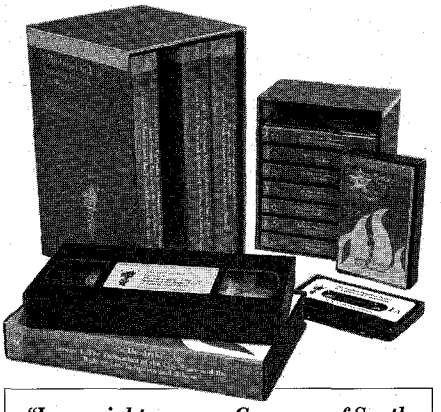

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tion—thanks in large part to Dewey—of the rather bizarre German version of idealism, the idea that reality is the creation of the human mind. But then intellectual religion in the late nineteenth century was already dissipating itself in a sea of social activism and mystic naturalism. Besides, intellectuals pride themselves on being odd, and there always had been the urge to dispense with God and declare oneself the "creator" of all "values." Idealism itself was merely a gloss upon Immanuel Kant's evisceration of the Golden Rule into the "logical" equation, "Don't do it unless you'd like everyone to do it"—itself merely a more rigorous formulation of the Jacobin claim of reason's moral superiority to clerical "superstition."

At its root pragmatism, the philosophy Dewey and William James jointly cooked up from Hegel and Darwin (with just a pinch of Marx), is the claim that man's reason is the proper measure of all things. After using idealism to destroy what remained of religion's hold on the university, Dewey discarded the notion of *any* ideal, arguing instead that all of life is merely contingent, that all may change, including human nature and society, and that all *should* change whenever change is convenient.

The goal, for Dewey, was to free man from his superstitions so that he might develop his capacities to the fullest. But in stripping the classical idea of human perfection from its basis in natural law—transcendent rules of proper thought and behavior—Dewey left only the science of empirical observation as the means to measure human worth. And science cannot measure what does not, by its own lights, exist. Because the soul cannot be measured, then, the pragmatist rather happily finds himself with only material criteria by which to judge the whole of life. The equal distribution of material goods, enforced by participation in the "democratic process," thus becomes the only "proper" pragmatic goal.

God had to go because He was transcendent, traditional, and tyrannical. He got in the way of "cooperative" efforts aimed at exploiting the apparent promises of terrestrial experience. Far better, thought Dewey, to construct a "civil" religion by which man could worship his own products. It was curious, then, was it not, that totalitarianism accompanied the death of man's faith in God? Yet not so curious, for the identification of politics as the good can lead only to the idea that man is good merely as a creature of politics (as in the cannibalistic Nazi *Volkgeist* or the Marxist project of creating the New Socialist Man) or to the legitimation of a dreary social democracy that impoverishes us all but is "fair, open, and equal."

Of course, most Americans have declined to follow Dewey into the realm of "non-theistic humanism"—we are even simple-minded enough to call it atheism. But the products of the pragmatic revolution surround us. From a welfare state that provides the material necessities of life while destroying its wards' reasons for living, to a bureaucracy intent on "scientifically" providing perfect safety and well being even at the cost of our liberty, to the "participatory democracy" of the college indoctrination session wherein our children are taught that God is just another oppressive, lying dead white male, Dewey's legacy is much less marginal than Mr. Westbrook would have us believe. Only by recognizing that the "goods" we so desired have thrust aside the spirit in our lives can we push Dewey's unworkable "pragmatism" and its bureaucratic progeny back into the man-made void whence they came. □

Astride Centuries

PETER M. COLLINS

HOW TO EXPLAIN the perennial fascination of Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes? Other judges, it could be argued, have decided more law. Benjamin Cardozo, while a state court judge, had occasion to write more abiding opinions on basic questions of modern common law. Other Justices of the Supreme Court such as Hugo Black and William Brennan have probably had greater influence on constitutional doctrine. Yet Holmes remains the preeminent American jurist and legal philosopher because of the historical depth and sheer intellectual horsepower he brought to decision-making. His forceful and glittering personality also played its part.

The Justice from Beacon Hill: The Life and Times of Oliver Wendell Holmes, by Liva Baker (HarperCollins, 784 pp., $29.95)

It is thus a little surprising that Liva Baker's *The Justice from Beacon Hill* is only the second full biography of Justice Holmes, following Sheldon M. Novick's *Honorable Justice*, published in 1989. (Catherine Drinker Bowen's 1944 *Yankee from Olympus* was partly fictionalized and not a work of serious scholarship.)

This is probably just as well. Early writings on Holmes tended to the hagiographic and tendentious. Also, Holmes's papers and correspondence were so vast that they outlasted the lives of a number of would-be biographers. Those scholars did, however, organize Alpine quantities of papers and gathered collections of Holmes's correspondence with such figures as the British socialist Harold Laski and the jurist Sir Frederick Pollock. With the perspective of more than fifty years and building on the uncompleted labors of these scholars, one can now assess Holmes on the basis of a more or less full record. Liva Baker has made a good job of it.

The book sets Holmes's long life against a large and central slice of American history. Born in 1841, Holmes knew elderly Bostonians who had witnessed the American Revolution; he himself was wounded three times in the Civil War; and he lived until 1935, well into the New Deal and almost up to the eve of the Second World War. Most importantly, he was a sitting judge, first on Massachusetts' highest court, then on the United States Supreme Court, for a critical half-century.

At every stage of that long lifetime Holmes was attuned to the life of the mind, and as a Boston Brahmin he was an intimate of many of its major figures. A reverent young acolyte of Ralph Waldo Emerson, he then had lifelong friendships with his coevals William and Henry James and Henry

Mr. Collins is a New York lawyer.

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Adams. In his later years he leavened his reading of Keynes and Oswald Spengler with *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, P. G. Wodehouse, and Agatha Christie.

Not the least of his achievements was his legal prose, his striking reduction of abstract ideas to lucid, concise, and aphoristic language: "The Fourteenth Amendment does not enact Mr. Herbert Spencer's *Social Statics*." "It is revolting to have no better reason for a law than that it was laid down in the time of Henry IV." The crisp prose style was carried over to his immense correspondence, quoted throughout this book. His letters were learned, gossipy, irreverent, droll, and always beguiling. And they had the now-lost ease and directness of correspondents who reached adulthood before the widespread transaction of business by telephone.

The author correctly views Holmes as an economic conservative, a social Darwinist, and an elitist. When off the bench, he voiced endlessly his contempt for political progressivism, and he loathed socialism. As Liva Baker puts it, "Economics bored him and utopian economics bored him absolutely." In that innocent pre-Nazi era he flirted with eugenics, even affirming a Virginia sterilization statute directed at the mentally feeble: "Three generations of imbeciles are enough."

Liberals of the Twenties and Thirties who made a plaster saint of Holmes had him wrong, and for much the same reason that they later had his disciple Felix Frankfurter wrong. Both expounded judicial restraint and deference to the legislative branch. For Holmes, it was not for the Supreme Court to judge the wisdom of reform legislation responding to "the felt necessities of the day." This was what legislators were paid for. The Court's duty, rather, was to give effect to legislative action unless some specific provision of the Constitution could be shown to have been violated.

He often found that none had. While privately viewing the Sherman Antitrust Act as "an imbecile statute," Holmes repeatedly voted to affirm its applications. He upheld all manner of wage-and-hour legislation and other reform measures when satisfied that no constitutional provision had been offended. The same cool logic led him to dissent without apology from a decision striking down an Alabama statute criminalizing a workman's breach of an employment agreement.

The origins of Holmes's famous opinions in the free-speech cases are more obscure. Holmes the Civil War veteran was at first disposed to enforce wartime sedition legislation against pacifists and anarchists. Something changed his mind. Liva Baker sides with those who think it was correspondence originating in a chance meeting on a vacation-bound train with Judge Learned Hand, who had recently thrown out a sedition prosecution only to see his opinion reversed on appeal. Others point to the influence of Frankfurter and other young liberal intellectuals.

We will probably never know. It will not be doubted, however, that the "clear and present danger" standard and the supporting rhetoric ("freedom for the thoughts we hate") are now part of the permanent juridical and intellectual patrimony of the nation.

One could take issue with Liva Baker's occasional exaggerations. Her pronouncement that "Burger's Court . . . began in the early 1970s to emasculate the exclusionary rule until it existed practically in name only" gets a little ahead of the story, as any perusal of current criminal decisions will demonstrate. But these are minor blemishes in an admirable work, well researched and dramatically written, that should serve as a needed introduction to one of the greatest figures in American intellectual history and public life. □

Heedless Bodies in Topless Bar

CHRISTOPHER BUCKLEY

YOU KNOW that famous Hollywood story about how Joan Didion and her husband, John Gregory Dunne (brother of the novelist Dominick Dunne), sold the idea for the movie *Panic in Needle Park* by pitching it to the studio bosses in five words: "Romeo and Juliet on junk"?

***Topless*, by D. Keith Mano (Random House, 256 pp., $18)**

The idea behind D. Keith Mano's new novel, *Topless*, is just as compressible: Episcopal priest manages topless bar. And Hollywood has snapped it right up; the movie rights went for a cool half mil before the book had even been sold to a publisher, and it could not have happened to a nicer guy, as any *NR* reader will agree. Mano has sweated mightily and long in the literary vineyard, trampling out seven fine novels (among them *The Bridge*, *The Death and Life of Harry Goth*). Readers of his last, the Joycean *Take Five*, will find *Topless* nicely un-Joycean, and into the bargain consecutively paginated.

The narrator, Father Michael Wilson, writes on the first page that "this diary, methinks, will not threaten Georges Bernanos much." This may be what the financial community likes to call "an anchor to windward." *Topless* is a neat little bastard of a cross between *Diary of a Country Priest* and . . . hm . . . *Silence of the Lambs*? It's also a savagely funny send-up of the current state of Episcopalianism while, oddly, reaffirming the ineluctable—to Christians—necessity of Grace, whatever weird, personal highway one travels in order to get it. In this respect Mano, who fled the altar of secular correctness for the pungent incense-billows of Russian Orthodoxy, is a bit like Chaucer, who, having told his wonderful, gross, and carnal tales, in the epilogue throws himself on the mercy of God in the hope He can take a joke.

Father Mike is a decent fellow. With Simon Lynxx, the hero of *Take Five*, he is a Manoesque—Manoverian?—*schlemiel*, a good person to whom bad things happen. Simon lost all five senses, one by one; Father Mike, assigned to a well-to-do parish in Lekachman, Nebraska, where he is pinched on the behind on the tennis court by one of his lady congregants, gets a call one day from his sister-in-law telling him that his brother Tony has disappeared—pffft—without a trace. Tony is the proprietor and manager of The Smoking Car, a raunchy topless bar and restaurant in Queens, New York. Foul play? Probably, and

Mr. Buckley's most recent book is Wet Work *(Knopf), a novel.*

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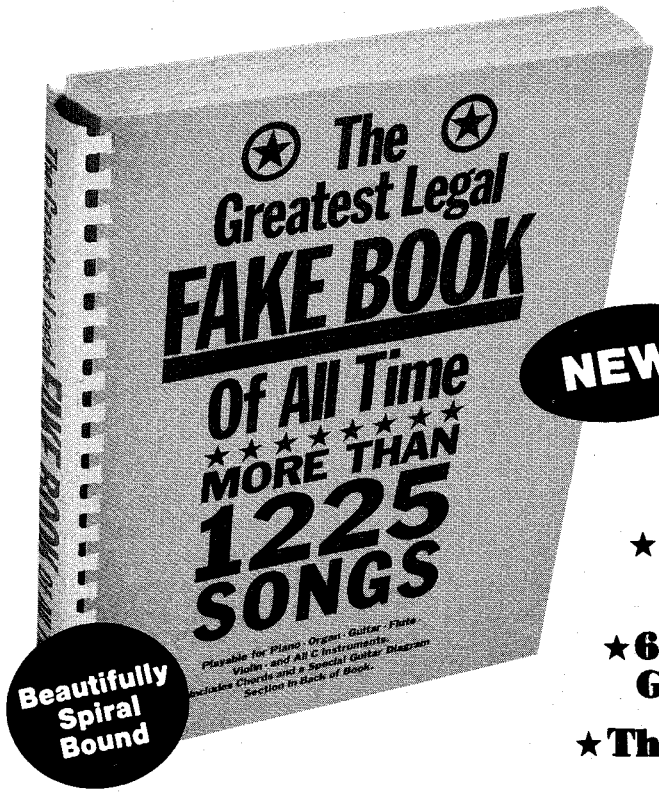
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perhaps by the mob. Mike gets permission to come back to his natal city to help look for Tony. Once he is back, Ethel, the sister-in-law, importunes him to take over managing The Car until Tony returns. Mike does what he figures is the right thing; his four nieces and nephews, after all, need food and clothing. And so begins his initiation into a netherworld of G-strings, where the girls are named Chinga, Changa, and Cleopatra, and the guys are named Joe. Watching the reasonably innocent Mike learn the ropes at The Car—hiring and firing, meeting the payroll, dealing with on-the-take employees—is hilarious stuff. The diary form allows his jottings full deadpan effect as he records such observations as that of one character who pays him the compliment, "Know how I can tell this is a classy joint? Ice in the urinals."

Perhaps taking its plot clue from the

RANDOM NOTES

■ DANCES WITH WOLVES. The Book Party is a tiresome tradition. Comes a pub date and the publisher hires a room someplace—or makes use of an executive's pied-à-terre—and invites a few select friends and numerous big mouths to come and shake the author's hand. The drinks are free. Baked ham, raw broccoli, and round crackers are served. And there is Brie; there is always Brie. And a few strawberries, even in winter. Certain journalists can be seen making a meal of this.

It is rarely the case that such parties are actually meant to "launch" a book; they merely celebrate the launch, like a *bon voyage* party. Usually the boat never sets sail. The author is left standing alone on deck, tickets and glossy brochures in hand, and the only sights he sees on his journey to fame and fortune are the backs of his editor, his publicist, his sales manager, who are walking away.

A book is just not "sexy" enough to warrant the sort of premiere gala that excites ballyhoo in Hollywood and on Broadway. I can think of few exceptions. But, brother, did I attend one the other night!

D. Keith Mano's *Topless* was launched with a vengeance at one of Manhattan's more inelegant addresses, 42 West 33rd. If you don't know it (and you don't), that's The Star Club, where from morning until morning it's stopless topless. Mr. Mano's novel is published by Random House, one of our tonier publishers, and a book party in a topless bar is not *their* idea of a good time. But, having been stranded on the old *Flying Dutchman* several times before, Mr. Mano hired his own publicist for *Topless*, and it was she who captained this cruise into uncharted waters. The publicists from Random House were there, of course, although the lady director looked a little pale.

Leaving the taxi I walked half a block to The Star, and noticed several publishing types standing out front showily clutching the invitation (*Mano a máquina de escribir* photographed between a dancer's legs). We're here for the *party*, this posturing said. We're *book* people, not breast men. A large person at the door demanded my name. I was wearing a green sport coat, and this thug took me for one of the regulars, who were barred for this evening. But a charming lady with a list recognized my name and ushered me in.

I was surprised not to be in the dark. Evolution apparently has streamlined the topless bar, which is spare and shark-like. Here men come to stand, stare, and drink. No chairs, no potted plants, no pictures on the walls. Behind the long bar is a narrow, brightly lighted stage on which, this night anyway, there were five attractive young women—five—in G-strings and high heels. They seem incredibly tall, and so it was odd to meet them when they came down from the stage to mingle with the literati, because the tallest was maybe five-six.

When Cousin Keith saw me (his mother was a Miner, you know), he gave me a hug, and pressed about ten dollar bills into my hand. "Tip 'em," he said, meaning the dancing girls, of course. "They're really nervous tonight. They're not used to this kind of crowd."

Well, no way was I going to shove a few bucks into a dancer's G-string—not even for dear Cousin—but as it happens you give the money to the muscular lady bartenders, and they give it to the girls. I sent a few bucks over to a nice-looking blonde girl, who seemed shy and danced dreadfully. She accepted the money from the woman behind the bar, who pointed over at me. The topless dancer made a curtsey, and our eyes met. This must be a large part of the appeal, I thought, because I confess I felt a little jolt, looking at this naked woman who was looking at me and smiling. (Cousin told me later that the girl was 19. "Old enough to dance here," he said, "but too young to have a beer.")

I stood there at the bar with Mrs. Mano (the actress Laurie Kennedy) and Rick Brookhiser and his wife, Jeannie, who is a psychologist, but also an accomplished amateur belly-dancer, and we studied the girls and began the inevitable intellectual's clinical dissection of the Phenomenon. One of the several camera crews covering the party zeroed in on us; on Jeannie especially, and she gave them some solid sound bites. They asked me the same thing Random House chairman Alberto Vitale did: "Where's your wife?" What would *she* think of this? And it seemed of more interest to everybody how *women* react to topless dancers—I suppose because women on our side of the bar are a rarity.

So is conversation. Usually the men at the bar sit silently, staring sullenly. But here we all were, jabbering away in a party mood. It must have been unnerving for the dancers to see the men at the bar . . . *talking to one another*! Thomas Mallon and I talked about Dan Quayle, for heaven's sake.

I said to Rick Brookhiser: "Where's Camille Paglia when you need her?" She's the author of *Sexual Personae: Art and Decadence from Nefertiti to Emily Dickinson*, and I'd enjoy going to The Star Club with her. She'd turn to me and say something like: "Every woman's body contains a cell of archaic light, where all knowing must stop."

And I'd say: "Uh huh. Ah, bartender . . . two more beers, please."

And Miss Paglia would say: "This is the profound meaning behind striptease, a sacred dance of pagan origins which, like prostitution, Christianity has never been able to stamp out. Erotic dancing by males cannot be comparable, for a nude woman carries off the stage a final concealment, that chthonian darkness from which we come."

"Oh?" I'd reply. "Then how come after about three minutes this sacred mystery is so damned boring?"

And she'd say: "Two more beers, please."

—BRAD MINER

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classic New York tabloid headline, HEADLESS BODY FOUND IN TOPLESS BAR, the book goes from black comedy to black mystery as the girls start turning up dead, in various states of mutilation. Who's doing this? Could it even be . . . Mike himself? This is his diary, after all; we only know what he chooses to tell.

Few details are spared. Come to think of it, no details are spared. If a body has been locked in a car trunk for a few weeks, you're about to find out just how bad it stinks. (Hint: a *lot*.) If in his last book Mano took away his hero's olfactory glands, he seems determined here to give them back. At times *Topless* reads like a scent-strip, and not from Armani cologne, either. *Viz*: "A smell like the stench of Satan's face came from inside of Ethel's house." (Make mine vanilla.)

D. Keith Mano is a journalist and he gets his details specific. He is also, as *NR* readers know, a jolly Dionysian who likes his meat cooked rare and his Big Apple wormy. He spent months researching the topless world, interviewing some two hundred people. In one memorable scene, Father Mike discovers to his horror that one of the dancers who recently had a baby is selling shots of mother's-milk-and-Kahlua at ten bucks a pop. Something tells me this really happened out there. *Reader's Digest* is unlikely to excerpt this chestnut for its Life in These United States series, but as a bottom-up novelist, Mano is entitled to his realism, even if he risks making Hilton Kramer wince.

For my money, Mano is one of the sharpest private ontological detectives around, and watching him train his glass on human absurdities is a joy. I liked *Topless* less for the murder and mayhem than for his riffs and descants, on everything from the superiority of crumbly brown bread to prepackaged white Communion wafers; and for his heat-seeking *aperçus* about such as the women who dance fast in order to blur their nakedness, "the smallest modesty." A jaded patron tells Father Mike: "I find great stupidity in women arousing. But, at my age, it has to be *great* stupidity. Mere dumbness doesn't do it anymore." Weary over finding dismembered dancers in his bar, and wearier still with trying to reconcile his priesthood with his lust-pandering, Mike sighs to his girlfriend, "I'm gonna go easy for a

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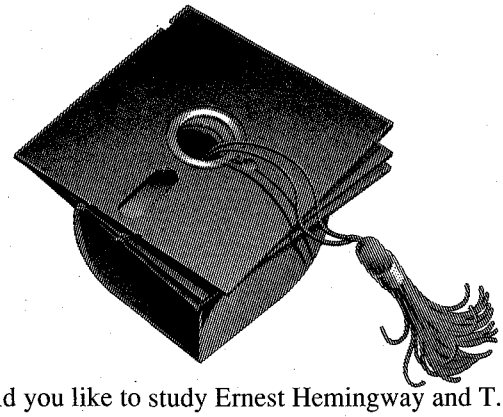

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long time. Right now I want life in the exact-change lane." One of his strippers, Bubbles, demands to know why he doesn't support a woman's "right" to an abortion. "A woman should exercise that right when she gets in bed with a man," he counters. "Women forget about that other right, the right not t'get laid." (That *t'* starts to cloy after a few hundred or so repetitions.) As a setting for a confessional, a raunchy topless bar in Queens gives good *mise-en-scène*.

Mano's wit is most lacerating when he trains it on the Episcopal Church: Father Mike's mother, we learn, left the Catholic Church and became an Episcopalian "because it was a step up socially"; a "supply priest" has to be procured for the local parish during summer as "The Holy Ghost takes a vacation in July and August—it's an Episcopal tradition"; when someone complains to Mike about a fellow priest being repressed, he fires back, "Thing you guys should realize by now—the Episcopal Church doesn't repress its priests *enough*."

And yet *Topless* as a whole is far from a mere punchy rejection of Anglican Christianity. On the contrary, after a harrowing climax it ends on a strangely wistful note that leaves one wondering where Mano is going to take his soul and psyche slumming next. My bags are packed. I'm looking forward to the trip. □

FILM

Growing Pains, Growing Joys

JOHN SIMON

IT DOES SET my teeth on edge to write out ***Boyz N the Hood***, but John Singleton's film is vastly preferable to the spelling of its title. Singleton is a 23-year-old graduate of the University of Southern California Filmic Writing Program (another grating piece of nomenclature) whose first feature this is. His writing and direction tend toward the schematic, and there are a few passages that strain credulity rather badly; all in all, though, I would rather have made this film than any one of Spike Lee's, or the lot of them rolled together.

The action is situated in south central Los Angeles, a black tract-house neighborhood—or hood—where young Tre Styles, the quasi-autobiographical hero, is growing up. His parents are divorced (Singleton's never married), and his mother, who wants to go back to school, turns the boy over to his father, Furious Styles, for the kind of upbringing whose lack makes so many kids in the hood go bad. A former army man now working in home mortgages, he is a calm, strong fellow whose hands keep skillfully revolving those Chinese metal balls, suggesting that Furious has gained his peace by learning to control the fury within.

The early sequences show us Tre aged ten with his buddies, in particular the Baker boys, Ricky and his half-brother Doughboy, whom their hard-working single mother does her best to keep in line. The hood is almost continuously overflown by jet planes that fray the nerves; shiftless young men, sometimes cruising in cars, terrorize the boys; a corpse in the streets is both an attraction to gape at and a thing to ignore a minute later as one plays ball close by; a young girl does her homework, ignoring as best she can the gunfire in the street outside.

In the main part of the movie, Tre and his pals are 17, but no better off. Gang members take potshots from their cars at whoever displeases them, bloodshed begets more bloodshed. There are raucous parties and sexual adventures for some; others are sustained by wish-fulfillment fantasies. Doughboy and his friends sit on the porch, drink, and talk big. Ricky, married already, studies hard to get test scores that will earn him a college scholarship. Tre is still undecided, but thrives under the guidance of Furious, who in one disturbing scene lectures him on the need to avoid the gunfights among black "brothers" that the whites, he says, encourage in order to decimate the black population. This is the only overtly white-hating speech, but as it is delivered by Furious, the film's *raisonneur*, one suspects that it issues from the filmmaker's mouth as well.

Tre finds a nice girlfriend, although his sexual initiation is one of the movie's most awkwardly shot sequences; Ricky is mowed down by those gun-happy hoodlums on his way home one time with Tre. In this least believable scene of all, Tre and Ricky, rightly feeling threatened, escape by climbing over various backyard walls, then split up, whereupon Ricky proceeds to lope homeward fully exposing himself and ignoring Tre's shouted warnings. He is promptly killed; with ponderous irony, the next mail brings his test results: he passed with flying colors. Aside from a few such heavy-handed plot maneuvers, there are scenes that seem directed too stiffly, or simply underpopulated. But, then, retakes and extras are costly, and low-budget pictures can ill afford them. What is more remarkable is how much of this film rings true. It accomplishes most of its bitter aims with unsensationalistic honesty.

Singleton does have problems with his cast, though. A number of the performances, including Cuba Gooding Jr.'s as Tre, are either histrionically or charismatically deficient; the young actress who portrays Ricky's wife is particularly unconvincing when she first glimpses her husband's corpse. But there are also successes. The rap singer Ice Cube is an entirely credible Doughboy, Morris Chestnut makes Ricky's almost too-good-to-be-true goodness sweetly believable, and as their tense, beleaguered mother, Tyra Ferrell, so good in an entirely different role in *Jungle Fever*, scores again. Much of what is so moving about this taut, edgy character comes

Mr. Simon, NR's film critic, is also theater critic for New York *magazine.*

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from her acting rather than from the writing. And that experienced stage actor Larry Fishburne makes Furious into an alert, complex, sympathetic character without sacrificing any of the man's basic hardness.

Almost eclipsing the merit of the film, though, has been its effect on black audiences, even on people outside the theaters where it has been playing. Both inside and out, in several cities, there have been shootings, injuries, some deaths. The terrifying paradox is that a work condemning shooting and killing among young blacks should elicit the opposite effect. What does this tell us? That tension has gotten so out of hand that anything, or nothing, can trigger violence? What is ultimately so discouraging is human—and I mean *universal* human—stupidity. Wherever one looks, there are people unable to understand what is plainly put before them. I am reminded of the Austrian playwright Ödön von Horváth's epigram, "Nothing conveys so well the sense of infinity as human dumbness."

Singleton's film ends with title cards summing up the characters' future, a tired and here also supererogatory device. Tre, we learn, went to Moorhouse College, an apparent *hommage* to Spike Lee. But, I repeat, Singleton is already the more interesting filmmaker; let's just hope that he knows where and how to go on from here.

■ Alan Parker's ***The Commitments*** is the Irish equivalent of his earlier *Fame*, and a white pendant to *Boyz N the Hood*. Based on a rock novel by young Roddy Doyle, and written by the veteran scenarists Dick Clement and Ian La Frenais in conjunction with Doyle, this is a film about the predicament of Dublin's working-class youth, for whom there is no work or hope of any kind of fulfillment. A bunch of them, viewing themselves as the underprivileged blacks of Ireland, discover "soul" music and proceed to form their own band for the playing and singing of it. More and more successfully they imitate black American musicians and singers, including girl back-up vocalists, until—in a downbeat ending that departs from the novel—they fail to pass the ultimate hurdle of successful recordings, and so must dissolve the band, to live off the sense of achievement it briefly afforded them.

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Though cleverly made and redolent of the looks (grime) and sounds (argot) of Dublin's Northside, this music-crammed film is likely to prove of consuming interest only to those who care about that music—some of it established, some of it written for the movie—performed enthusiastically by a cast made up for the most part of young rock musicians. Still, even if, like me, you have no use for the music, you may respond to the life of Dublin in its most abject and compassion-eliciting aspects, and to the passion with which these boys and girls embrace soul music as their salvation. Yet for all the fine performing and authentic ambiance, there is not enough plot or character development; you can pay only so much attention to divisive intramural sex and slangy internecine bickerings among band members.

There is, however, a montage of sequences that I found absorbing, funny, even moving. When the hero, Jimmy Rabbitte, places an ad in the paper seeking musicians for his projected band, any number of odd, hopeful, hopeless young men and women present themselves at his back door. This talent search that reveals much more overconfident or desperate self-promotion than actual talent is memorable not only for its sociological insights, but also for the way Parker shot it (good cinematography from Gale Tattersall) and edited it (precise cutting by Gerry Hambling). For the moviegoer who catches both *Boyz N the Hood* and *The Commitments* (the name the band picks for itself), there is much to speculate about in the parallel between guns in south central Los Angeles and music on Dublin's Northside.

■ If, however, you are looking for something gentler and sweeter, but that still eschews the vulgar escapism thrown at you nowadays from every side, there remains an attractive tertium quid in the double-header the gifted Yves Robert has fashioned from the childhood reminiscences of that racy and jovial French writer, Marcel Pagnol. Remembered most for his plays *Topaze* and the Marius Trilogy, Pagnol was also a filmmaker of distinction. Recently, we had Claude Berri's twin films, *Jean de Florette* and *Manon of the Spring*, based on Pagnol's most ambitious novel; now Robert has made his sibling movies, ***My Father's Glory*** and ***My Mother's Castle***, from the first two tomes (1957) of Pagnol's four-volume memoirs of his childhood and youth.

Yves Robert, a marvelous comic stage actor and director of lively film comedies, made these films as a septuagenarian, and though he is a northerner, his feeling for Provence, the wonderful herb-scented hills of southern France, and for Marseille, the two locales of the movies, is as acute as it is sympathetic. Most of all, though, Robert has a splendid sense of children, as he demonstrated with *The War of the Buttons* (1961), and of the childish foibles and entanglements of adults, as recorded in *Salut l'Artiste* (1973), two films that should be on everybody's hit parade.

The subject of *Glory* and *Castle* is the way Marcel's somewhat giddy schoolteacher father and his lovely but earthy seamstress mother gravitated from the city to the country, leaving Marseille ever longer behind for enchanted sojourns in Provence. It's a film not so much of a boy's growing up as of an entire family's falling in love with nature, and of how one painstakingly learns to meet the demands of that exacting mistress. It is also a film about being a family—father, mother, two boys, spinster aunt, with occasional incursions by a rich, rambunctious uncle—and how these people make out with one another in one of the world's most beautiful countrysides, condignly photographed by Robert Alazraki. What gets lost in the translation and the foreshortened subtitles, alas, is the language, e.g., "a little winter sun, pale and tonsured like a monk."

Glory is good, but *Castle* is even better; still, one must see both, and in that order. The performances are all solid and idiosyncratic—the cast was chosen for being, among other things, able to sound genuinely southern—and, as usual, it is precisely the authentic sense of time and place that makes these films truly universal. I particularly enjoyed Nathalie Roussel, whom every man and boy in the audience will recognize as his dream spouse or mother, yet who exudes not a trace of treacle; and also the faun-like Victorien Delmare, as Paul, the mountain boy who befriends Marcel and teaches him the ropes of outdoor living. As Marcel, Julien Ciamaca is a trifle too beautiful and passive, but the world that swirls around him is full of recognizable, merrily invigorating, and cherishable life. □

DELECTATIONS

On the Rails

TAKI

BACK IN the good old days when manners were more important than money, people traveled by train. Even tennis players. My first trip ever as an adult was in 1954, from Athens to Belgrade aboard the Orient Express. Greece was playing Yugoslavia in junior Davis Cup, and I was half of a two-boy team. Our non-playing captain and escort was a Colonel Chrissoulis, as fierce an anti-Communist as Boris Yeltsin, but prone to put personal comfort ahead of the national interest. When he discovered the tennis federation had booked only two beds, he plunked himself on the lower berth, gave my partner, Nico Kalyvas, the upper, and ordered me to a rear coach occupied by peasants and their animals. (His rather lame excuse was that Nico, being poor, had suffered during the war and needed his sleep, while I could afford to go without it.)

Thus began my lifelong romance with trains. As well as my distaste for goats and chickens. Three years later I joined the tennis circuit, and trains became my second home. In the late Fifties, before jet travel, life had a different rhythm. The trip at times assumed a more important role than the destination. As in the case of the Blue Train, for example. This was, and is still, the train that takes one from Paris to the French Riviera overnight —a train driven by Cupid, according to French folklore. I can't vouch for it now, but in my time the hanky-panky

Taki Theodoracopulos, who writes the "High Life" column for The Spectator *in London, is the author of* Nothing to Declare *(Atlantic Monthly Press).*

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John Ward

that went on would have made Miss Biddle Barrows flush. There was even a story making the rounds that the Blue Train stopped ten minutes before Cannes in order for the lovers of other people's husbands and wives to disembark. Leave it to the French to start such rumors.

Some thirty or so years later, things are not the same. The French Riviera is a sweaty, overbuilt hellhole, *le Train Bleu* a haven for muggers rather than lovers. This summer alone more than fifty people have been held up and robbed. It is Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid all over again, this time with a North African accent. Last summer I tried to go back in time and took a nostalgic trip to the playground of my youth. It turned out to be the kind of nightmare—daymare rather—that drives strong men to the safety of Switzerland.

So this summer, going into my 55th year, I tried it once more: tennis and trains. But only in good old Helvetia, the country Papa Hemingway described as more upside down than sideways. And it all worked to perfection. Just the fact that I didn't have to battle fleas, mosquitos, wasps, and heat rash would have been enough. Crisscrossing the top of the world on a train was an added bonus.

It began with the Glacier Express, a mountain rail line that connects two of the many jewels of the Alpine crown, St. Moritz and Zermatt. My tennis partner and I had just competed in the St. Moritz 45-and-over tennis tournament and, having lost in the final to two Americans, were on our way back to Gstaad, my summer base. The Glacier Express runs three times daily, and no sooner had we started than Nico and I forgot all about our defeat.

The absolute high point—literally as well as figuratively—is the cog-driven transit over the Oberalp Pass, as majestic a view as any on earth. We crossed almost two hundred bridges—info supplied by our conductor, as Nico and I were counting only the beers we consumed—and snaked through half as many tunnels. The breathtaking scenery was matched only by the feat of railroad engineering, although I did notice Nico crossing himself occasionally and playing with his worry beads. Our fellow passengers were mostly young, blonde, Germanic. The only person missing was Julie Andrews bursting out in song.

One week later we took a no less adventurous trip on the Palm Express, on our way to yet another oldie tournament at Lugano, on the Swiss–Italian border. On this route the panorama progresses along the shores of the beautiful lakes of Ticino into Italy and back to Switzerland, the difference being that the worry beads remained in Nico's pocket. Lugano, however, was a disaster, with Nico pulling a muscle in the singles final, and me having to scratch because of a business problem back in Berne.

On our way home we took the Golden Pass line, which connects Lucerne with the French part of Switzerland. We passed austere Lake Brienz on the way to Interlaken, with its impressive view of the Eiger and Jungfrau peaks. Then down through Saanenland to beautiful Gstaad. The Golden Pass has special panorama cars and runs daily from Lucerne to Montreux. The cars are as clean as can be, the service impeccable. God willing, Nico and I plan to repeat our three train trips every summer, even if we have to do it in wheelchairs one day. Every Swiss rail car provides for that eventuality, too. □

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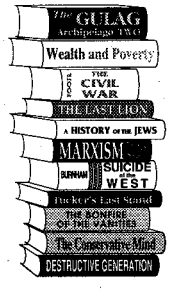

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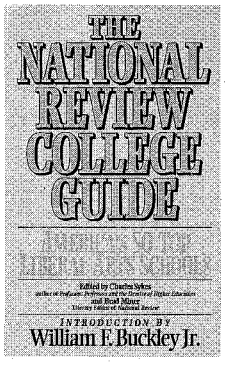

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SOLZHENITSYN

(Continued from page 44)

system does not inspire political figures to rise above their political interests; quite the reverse: a campaign based on moral principles can become a recipe for defeat.

In any case it is not feasible for the people to give their representatives precise instructions concerning all future contingencies. Nor does there exist a stimulus that will impel those deputies holding office to rise above their *future* electoral interests and above party machinations so as to serve only the clearly perceived interests of the country. As a result, the actions that are taken are those having immediate appeal to the voters, even though the long view might suggest that these actions will bring them harm. And in a country as large as ours, the possibility of keeping tabs on elected representatives is correspondingly reduced, while the chance of abuses on their part increases.

These critical comments about contemporary democracy are not meant to suggest that the future Russian Union will have no need for democracy. *It will need it very much.* But given our people's total lack of preparation for the intricacies of democratic life, democracy must be built from the bottom up, gradually, patiently, and in a way designed to last rather than being proclaimed thunderously from above in its full-fledged form.

All the failings noted earlier would rarely apply to democracies of small areas—mid-sized towns, small settlements (*poselki*), groups of villages (*volosti*, *stanitsy*), or areas up to the size of a county (*uyezd*, *rayon*). Only in areas of this size can voters have confidence in their choice of candidates, since they will be familiar with them both in terms of their effectiveness in practical matters and in terms of their moral qualities. At this level phony reputations do not hold up, nor would a candidate be helped by empty rhetoric or party sponsorship.

These are precisely the dimensions within which the new Russian democracy can begin to grow, gain strength, and acquire self-awareness. It also represents a level that is most certain to take root because it will involve the vital concerns of each locality: ensuring unpolluted water and air, overseeing housing, hospitals, nurseries, schools, shops, and the local distribution of goods, while also giving vigorous support to the growth of untrammeled local economic initiatives.

Without properly constituted local self-government there can be no stable or prosperous life, and the very concept of civic freedom loses all meaning. □

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TOWN CRIER

Welcome . . . to the "Town Crier" page, which, each issue, will keep you abreast of Town Hall, NATIONAL REVIEW's new 24-hour conservative meeting place.

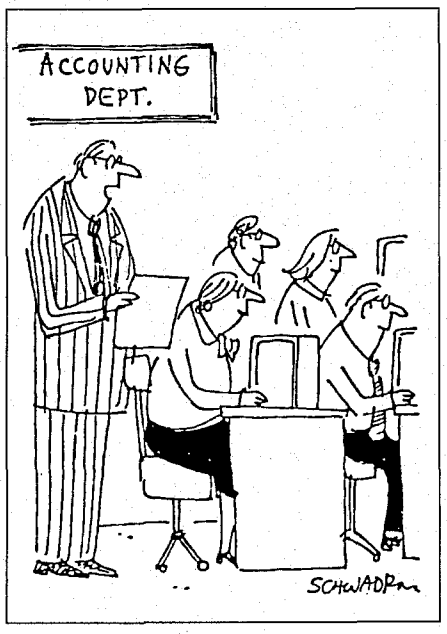
Launch date for Town Hall is September 10. That's when those of you who have already become Town Hall members will attend our ribbon-cutting festivities (from 7 to 9 P.M. EDT) in the Town Hall Conference Center, joining *NR* Publisher Wick Allison, Editor John O'Sullivan, *NR* staffers, and fellow conservatives like yourselves to talk about whatever you want. And if you and some new-found conservative friends want to launch your own conference—on last issue's cover story, or the latest events in the Soviet Disunion, or whatever—feel free. Naturally your friends at *NR* (our entire staff regularly participates in Town Hall) will drop in, say hi, and engage you in a bit of discussion.

Thomas Reaction. September 10 isn't just Day One for Town Hall: it's also the first day for the Senate Judiciary Committee hearings on Clarence Thomas. What better place for you to discuss, react, and analyze, immediately, the hearings and coverage than in the Town Hall Conference Center's special Thomas Hearings live parley? It will start at 8:30 P.M. EDT, with John O'Sullivan and media nemesis Brent Bozell hosting it from then until 10 P.M. (night owls can continue the discussion on their own into the wee hours). Be there, and count on Town Hall's Washington Wire to keep you informed—we'll be filing updates throughout the day.

Activity Already. The paint may still be wet, but Town Hall's facilities are humming anyway. On August 25 ten *NR* staffers and Town Hall testers (participating from Iowa, Alabama, Florida, New York, Arizona, Virginia, and Massachusetts!) hurled questions at Publisher Wick Allison on the aborted Soviet coup and its fallout. The back-and-forth was sharp, witty (Member Tom Smith of Mesa, Arizona, on the contents of the Yeltsin-seized KGB files: "Those things are going to be in the *steyngazeti* for months, if not years to come. There's everything from Alger Hiss's pay stubs to who knows what"), enlightening, and frank (Allison on the role of domestic policy in the 1992 elections: "Iraq and the coup have been blessings to Bush, but they are now over. Domestic policy will rule, and we don't have one").

FYI: We're planning to hold a conference every Sunday night to discuss who said what about whom on the weekend political talk shows (McLaughlin, Brinkley, *The Capital Gang*, etc.). The first one happens September 15; just bring your opinions to the Town Hall Conference Center from 8:30 to 9:30 P.M. EDT.

Meeting Place. Lively debates among testers are taking place in the Town Hall Meeting Place, where there has been a crossfire of comments and retorts under topics like Law, *Kulturkampf*, Rumors and Scuttlebutt, U.S. Strategic Interests, Crime in the Streets, Media, and Education. Dialogue on the Clarence Thomas nomination and its political effect on blacks—and black "leaders" and the Democratic Party—is under way in the *Kulturkampf* section.



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"The computers are down. Does anyone remember how to add and subtract?"

George Gilder (Town Hall board member and user) has gotten into that fray with some typically frank Meeting Place comments: "Conservatives should not take solace from public-opinion polls about the views of blacks or any other Democrats and their divergence from the catered position of Democratic leaders selling their soul for PAC money and media support and intelligentsia chic." And on the political battle over Thomas, one well-connected Town Hall member reported (a week before it became public knowledge!) that NARAL has "just placed a $90,000 time-buy order for one week of saturation anti-Thomas ads to begin September 3." That brought this response from Member Bill Pascoe (Alexandria, Virginia): "Why are we getting so upset about whether our time-buy matches theirs? Clarence is in, solid. No one's going to be able to muster even 25 votes against him . . . I'll lay even money on that, with anyone who asks." Want to respond? Become a Town Hall member and you can.

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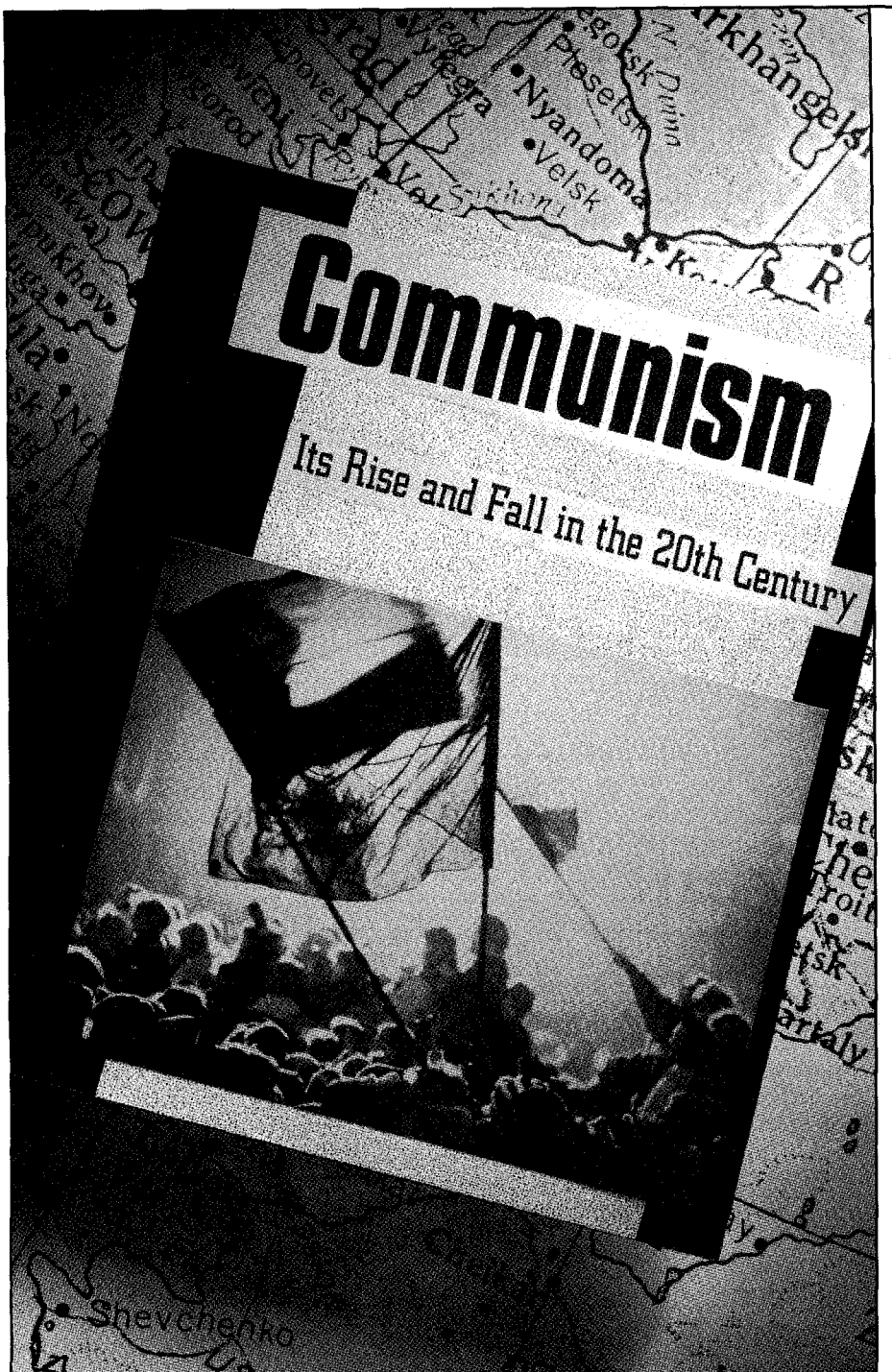

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Let's Drink to That!

NEW YORK, AUGUST 21

The sensation is of writing a story about the Kentucky Derby the horses having just lurched out of the gate, but there isn't time to see who wins. Deadlines.

So . . . I write on the assumption that the coup has failed. Concerning it, and its implications, a few observations:

1. The failure of the coup is the most exciting event since the liberation of Eastern Europe. The sheer jubilation in the knowledge that the Russian people for the first time in seventy years actually count for something brings sweetness even to the air in Tiananmen Square, and in Havana they will dance and sing all night long. That the coup's dissolution was accomplished without shedding copious amounts of blood suggests that Providence couldn't stand the thought of yet more Russian blood, after all that they have paid to live in the twentieth century under the czar, and then Stalin, and then Hitler, and back to Stalin and his successors.

2. Mr. Bush played his part adroitly, but it is also true that luck was with him. The business about not recognizing the junta was fine for the limited time you can play that game. The rule tends to be that de facto authority becomes de jure authority. The one great exception to this during the postwar season was China. Until 1971, Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang occupied the UN seat designated for China notwithstanding that he was driven out of the Mainland in 1949. When Robert Strauss was sent to Moscow, his instructions were not to present his credentials to the junta. But no one at the United Nations thought to disqualify the representative there who appeared in the name of the junta. Raising the interesting question: If the junta had stayed on in power, and Mr. Bush had decided to play hardball, how might he have made out sponsoring a motion in the General Assembly having to do with procedure? Because it was a procedural motion (sponsored, ironically, by Albania) that prevailed in the fall of 1971 ordering that the representative of Mao, rather than of Chiang, occupy the seat in the Security Council.

3. Everyone realizes that the people who tried to dispossess Gorbachev, and his countrymen of their hard-won little freedoms, were all officials in Gorbachev's cabinet. Gorbachev's operating rule while directly in power was: one half hard-liners, one half sycophants. The latter weren't enough to cope with the former, and Gorbachev came close to losing his head at the hands of his own ministers, which is vintage Bolshevism.

4. The Machiavellian principle that you do not fool with the prince unless you are prepared to kill him was never more clearly vindicated than in the current exercise. If the junta had executed Yeltsin (no legal problem there: as an emergency committee, it had plenipotentiary powers, and Yeltsin did not hesitate for one moment in ordering the demonstrations and strikes expressly forbidden by the emergency committee—penalty? Death), it would have been hell in the chancelleries of public opinion for—what? A week? How long did we all stay mad at Khrushchev for invading Budapest? Or at Brezhnev for Prague? Or, for that matter, for shooting down KAL 007? Monday and Tuesday were days for supplication to the Lord for the preservation of Yeltsin. If a bullet had stopped that redoubtable heart, life might have gone out of the whole nation.

5. Whole nation? Not any longer. Boris Yeltsin, as president of the Republic of Russia, has to emerge as the principal figure in the confederation. The treaty that was the tripwire of the coup will go forward now, with the kind of serenity it would not have had without the torment of the past few days. And from that moment on, Gorbachev will become more and more a kind of Queen Elizabeth of what was once the terrible USSR.

Not, understand, that we won't have plenty of problems in the future, and any congressman who votes now against SDI should be exiled to the Crimea. But for the moment, it is time to raise the champa—CUT!—to raise the glass of vodka, and shout out, *Na zdorovye!* □

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What Do We Do Now?

NEW YORK, AUGUST 19

In March 1990 I published in this space what I thought to be the soundest advice on U.S. foreign policy, taken from an essay by Professor John Roche. He has for many years lighted up, by his insight and his style, the relevant points on the cold war. And his point, a year and a half ago, was that the time had come for the United States, vis-à-vis the Soviet Union, to do: Nothing.

What have we done? Well, we had a disarmament treaty which means nothing much in that it has not been implemented, and even after it has been, we are still sitting ducks for a first strike.

We heard Mr. Gorbachev announce, and then go back on, economic reforms, one after another.

We applauded his decision to go the way of devolution of political powers, but not to the point of asserting the rights of the Baltic nations to independence.

Most conspicuously, we have dragged our feet on the matter of building a missile defense system, though Senator Nunn did consent to breathe a little emaciated breath into the program a few weeks ago. With the coup, every expert and pseudo expert, and by the way it is nowadays almost impossible to distinguish between them, is saying that we did too much, we did just enough, we didn't do enough. Professor Roche wrote at the beginning of 1990 that the United States had reached exactly the moment at which it pays not to elaborate a grand strategy. And the principal reason for this is that there isn't very much we can do about the primary problems the Soviet Union now faces. "Never get mixed up," he counseled, "in the religious wars of other people's churches."

"We have to realize that while we can blow up the world, we simply can't persuade Azeris to be lovable toward Armenians, or vice versa." History yielded us a great and unexpected dividend with

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the advent of *glasnost* and *perestroika*. But, Roche warned, the Gorbachev phenomenon is not one we were ever in any position to fine-tune. "There will be earthquakes—the hard-faced men in uniform may decide to close Gorbachev's playground before they find themselves the praetorian guard of the Grand Duchy of Muscovy." All that we could ever hope to do with the Soviet Union pre Gorbachev is all that we can hope to do now, confident that what did finally happen, would happen: that "the odious system would eventually implode. It has, and we find the world's second largest outdoor slum."

But does this mean a return to the arms race? Roche's comment: "Some critics say, Haven't we wasted a huge amount of money on an arms race? Yes, we have spent a lot of money, fortunately unnecessarily (so far: there are still those SS-18s, 19s, 24s, 25s, plus SSBNs deployed), but—in terms of a percentage of GNP—nothing like what they have expended. But an arms race? We have been arguing about deploying a mobile ICBM for over a decade; they have over thirty rail-mobile 24s and 165-plus road-mobile 25s prowling around the countryside. Moreover, I grew up in a non-arms race and was in a world war at age 19."

Mr. Roche recommended then that the Europeans be edged toward responsibility for their own defense. The United States of America "no longer has to double as the Salvation Army." And this is not isolationism, Mr. Roche stressed, but strategic realism: "As Gorby jumps from ice floe to ice floe we can applaud his agility, but we cannot 'save' him."

Our responsibilities at the moment are to keep our powder dry, to get on with SDI. "Then, maybe in ten years, we can unleash the grand strategists to engage in vision-mongering, but in the meantime focus on keeping any Archduke from visiting Sarajevo." Mr. Bush should return to Kennebunkport. □

Miracles Miraculously Communicated

NEW YORK, AUGUST 26

Here are some exciting moments captured by electronic communications emanating from beleaguered Moscow. They fanned out (literally) with the speed of light, throughout Russia—and throughout the world. We will call my correspondent "Hugh."

Bill: The following was posted on BIX today by Fred Langa, editor-in-chief of *BYTE* (computer mag, circ. 500,000):

■ To: Jerry/Russia #1168, from F/Langa, Thu Aug 22 09:21:19
Title: More on computers/communications and the coup

Yesterday, NPR said Bush talked to Gorbachev "sometime after noon."

Pachikov's call to me came in at 12:10. Now look at the MCI time stamp on the following message:

Date: Wed Aug 21, 1991 11:52 am EST
From: Levon Amdilyan

My dear friends:

I would like to thank all of you for your deep concern and support in connection with the events we had last two day here in Moscow and USSR. Now it seems that everything is close to be restored. We hope to see and hear Gorbachev within several hours. The democracy won in our country and it could only be done with the people who felt what is a real freedom. And for lot of us such sense came also from computer market and free flow of information. . . . Tomorrow we'll have restored all usual broadcasting and mass media. Everything is calm in Moscow. Thank you once again.

Levon Amdilyan

(Comment from Hugh: That "free flow of information" really did have an impact. And over here, it meant that individuals could learn of the coup's failure before the President did.)

■ To: jerry/moscow #1188,
From: a/thomson, Fri Aug 23 12:44:09
Title: Patriarchal message

Moscow (Aug. 23) Patriarch Aleksei of Moscow and all Russians addressed a message, released here today, to the hierarchs, clergy, and believers of the Russian Orthodox Church. The message notes that the abortive coup was attempted by those who were sure they would not be made responsible for their actions either before God or people:

"The coup could not be crowned with success if only for the reason that it was started, as if in outrage over all the sacred things in our motherland, on the day when the church celebrates the great holiday of the transfiguration of the Lord.

"Now Russia can address to them the words addressed by Joseph to his brothers: 'Ye thought evil against me, but God meant it unto good.'

"The futile and bitter work of destruction must come to an end at long last. Russia begins its labor and feat of recovery. [Beware] the lure of empty verbiage and [do not participate in] the futile effort of the dark forces."

The message is sealed with the patriarch's own signature.

■ The following was downloaded from BIX:
From F/Langa, Wed Aug 21 12:20:40
Title: Live from Moscow, 12:10 EST

I just heard from Stepan Pachikov, calling from Moscow:

"The bandits are gone," he said. "Everything is back to normal now. The TV and radio is showing live debate from the Russian Parliament. . . .

"I knew this coup could not last. Only I was wrong: I thought it would take 2 weeks. Instead it took 2 days.

"Our office shut down; no programming for two days. But we were there and very busy. Every few minutes, our fax would receive a new message from Yeltsin's group. We would retransmit the information to as many other faxes as we could, and print out hard copy on our laser printer to distribute on the streets. It is as I said before, Fred: the age of information has changed everything. Now bandits cannot rule our country any more. We can spread information and they cannot stop us."

(Comment from Hugh: I find that fax-machine detail fascinating. Short of shutting down the entire phone system, it is now nigh impossible to cut off intercommunication. By the way, the Russians, with their chess-master mentality, are emerging as some of the best software writers going. An area in which Americans also excel, but Japanese are notoriously deficient. My sense is that the Japanese mentality is conditioned from an early age to decision by negotiation and consensus, which is exactly what software—a chain of either–or nodes—tends *not* to do.)

■ Note from Hugh: Here is the passage I think you're looking for. It's from *Discourses on Livy*, Book III, Ch. 6, "On Conspiracies": "The threat of bloodshed is more dangerous than is the shedding of blood. To threaten to shed blood is, in fact, extremely dangerous: whereas to shed it is attended with no danger at all, for a dead man cannot contemplate vengeance, and those that remain alive usually leave you to do the contemplating." □

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They Never Would Be Missed

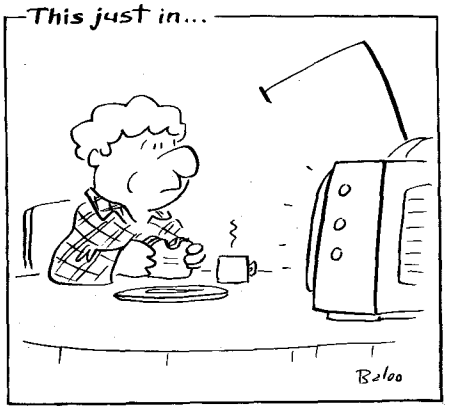
LIKE ALMOST everybody else in this great hemisphere of ours, I awoke that mid-August Monday to news of the Soviet coup. I stayed in my apartment most of the day, nursing a cold and following events on the radio.

Some time before lunch I found a talk show, not one of the high-pitched AM gabfests but a public-radio chinwag, with low sober voices massaging the terrible news. And at that point, you'll recall, the news *was* terrible, which made the talk show's guest, a reliably anti-Communist Sovietologist whom I admire, feel great. For this spring he had published an article predicting "that Gorbachev would be gone before the summer was over." Amazingly, he mentioned his piece several times without once saying "I told you so." He didn't need to. He had written that Gorbachev's ouster would be by force, that it would happen before fall, and here it was, he scarcely needed to add but did anyway, still summer, and where was Gorbachev? Gorbachev was gone. By force. As had been predicted. By—well, you get the idea.

I intensify his gloating, just a bit, and as a part-time pundit myself I do sympathize with him. There was an edge to his voice, an anxiety that betrayed the hot expectation that the next phone call would be from *MacNeil/Lehrer*, and then the next from Bob Novak at *The Capital Gang*, followed by the contract with Washington Speaker's Bureau and the one-day speaking trips to the Rotary in Columbus or Des Moines at $4,000 a pop, all for the man who had predicted the successful coup. By late Tuesday, I expect, his slow slide began, and by Thursday he was a certified chump. Now he is probably lying low, hoping desperately for some sign that history will still prove him correct. After all, as I write, summer isn't over.

As I write. Clumsy words, but essential to the pundit's art. Punditry is a treacherous business when history's march disintegrates into a slam dance, as it clearly has in the Soviet Union (you may quote me). This morning's fool is tomorrow's seer; if you took the long view yesterday you might look like a chucklehead tonight. As the coup unfolded, then folded, book publishers scrambled to play catch-up. Delacorte had released a novel in May about a Soviet leader up-ended in a coup. "We're trying to push the fact we were prescient," said a publicist on Tuesday. On Thursday the volumes were probably remaindered.

This whipsaw effect can be a delight to watch. It depends on the pundit. On one memorable occasion in 1979, as a deadline breathed down his neck, word came to the *New York Times*' James Reston that Nelson Rockefeller was dead. Details were sketchy but Reston, whose Olympian self-importance raised the profession of punditry to new levels of insufferability, leapt to the typewriter anyway. What he wrote has given hours of pleasure ever since—in the light of our subsequent knowledge that Rocky died not at his office but late at night in a townhouse, in the company of a toothsome 25-year-old research assistant who wasn't, as it were, happy: "It should probably be remembered that Nelson Rockefeller died at his desk . . . after almost everybody else had gone home for the weekend. He was a worker, a yearner, and a builder to the end. He was not working when he died on the struggles, achievements, and disappointments of his political life but on the consoling influences of art, beauty, and love in personal life."



"MacNeil and Lehrer are off tonight; we're Bob and Ray."

Hilarious, yes, but is this fair? Within the pundits' club there seems to be a bylaw against quoting a colleague after he has, as the phrase has it, been overtaken by events. Like the proverbial honor among thieves, this is clearly to the benefit of every member of the club, and during the days of the Russian upheaval I saw it violated but once, by Anthony Lewis. On that first Monday the *Wall Street Journal*'s editorialists had speculated on a "Potemkin coup" orchestrated for Gorbachev's benefit. The following Monday Lewis quoted the editorial derisively, forgetting, perhaps, his own words on another coup years before, when some alarmist conservatives were warning against the rise of the agrarian reformer Pol Pot. "Some will find the whole bloodbath debate unreal," Lewis wrote in March 1975. "What future possibility could be more terrible than the reality of what is happening to Cambodia now?" In the words of the pundit: Time would tell.

AS Lewis's career demonstrates, however, you can be a chump quite consistently and still hear the lovely jingle of a phone call from *MacNeil/Lehrer*. It's a matter of technique. The pundit with staying power avoids the unconditional phrase, the flat-out assertion, the prognostication with no strings attached. "On the one hand, on the other hand" is shopworn, but a string of contradictory "If . . . then" hypotheticals has the twin virtues of covering every contingency and being almost impossible for the reader to follow. Using the above-mentioned "As I write" helps, but overuse makes the pundit look like a mere *journalist*, a hack subject to the sway of history rather than a swami hovering serenely above it.

At last a pundit becomes venerable, and is allowed the ultimate luxury of making no sense whatsoever. I quote, with stunned admiration, this line from Mary McGrory's first column on the anti-Gorbachev coup: "It was a surprise and no surprise at all." The old gal's a survivor.

—ANDREW FERGUSON

Mr. Ferguson is an editorial writer for Scripps Howard News Service.

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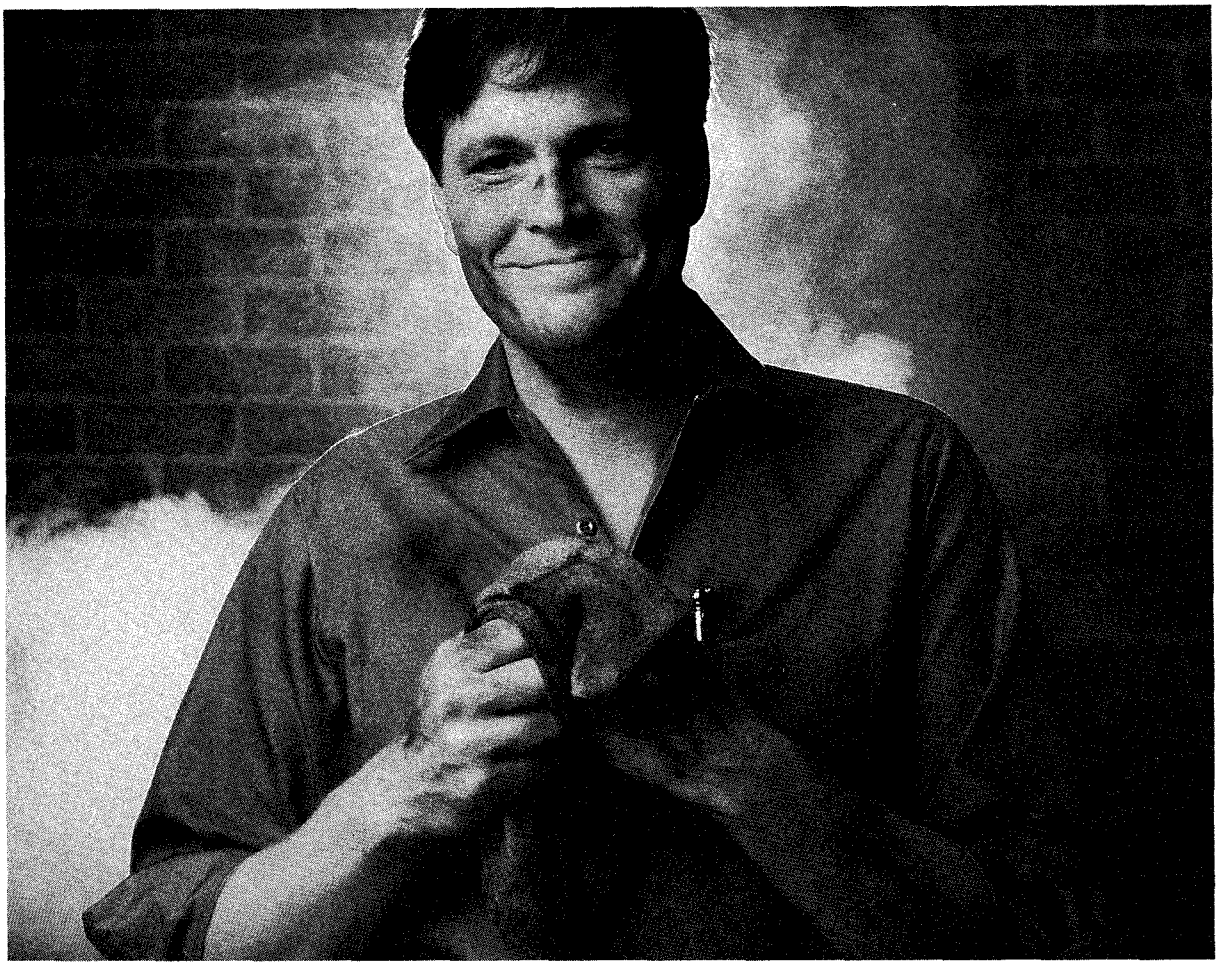

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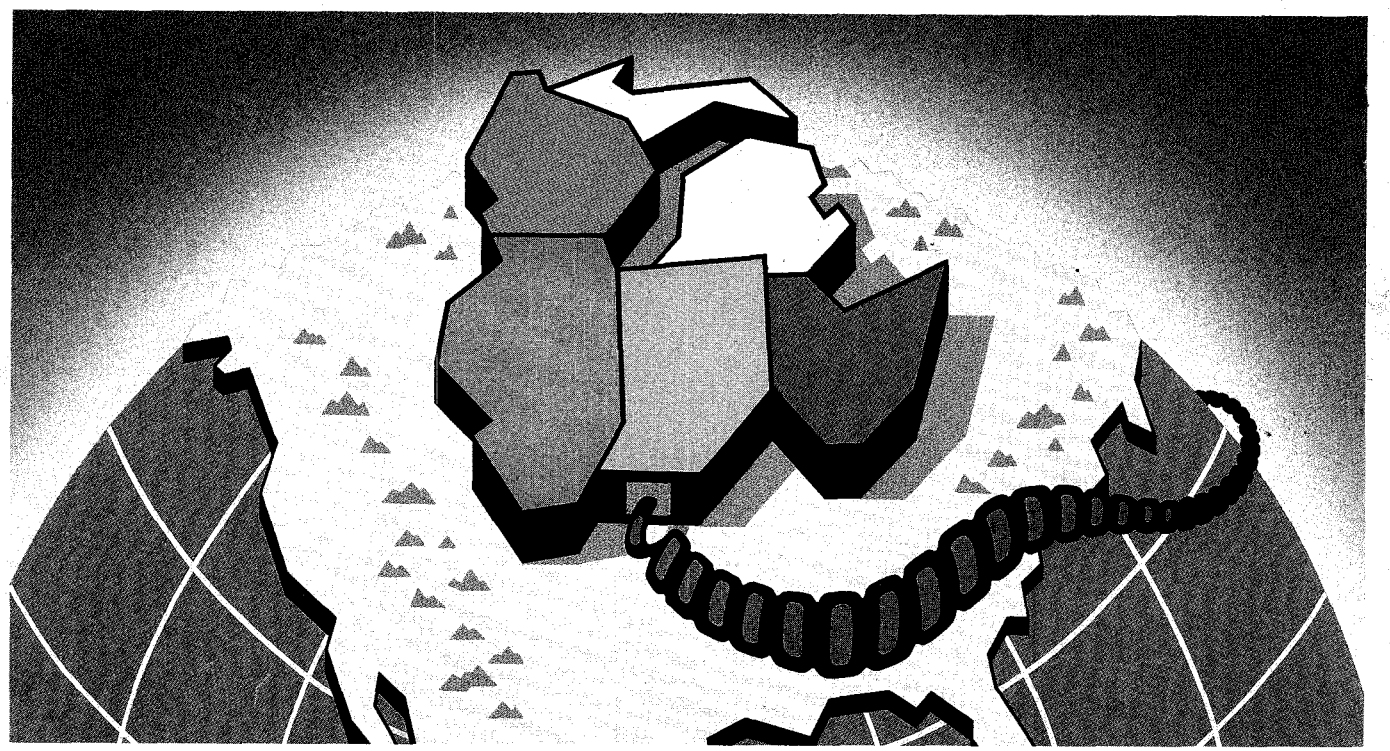

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